

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

October, 2017

Featured Artist

Marlene Burns

"Urban Abstracts"

Cover Image: *Compilation 12*
© Marlene Burns





Dek Unu Magazine

Eleven

This is **Dek Unu Magazine**. In Esperanto, dek unu means "eleven." Eleven Images from a single artist. Eleven artists in eleven solo issues each year.

Dek Unu publishes the work of a new photoartist in each issue. The artist's work and words are featured alone and in individual focus as the sole purpose for each issue of the magazine. Unlike other arts and letters magazines which might look for work from a variety of artists to support an editorial staff's theme, at **Dek Unu**, theme and imagery are always each artist's own.

Dek Unu seeks challenging, complex work that focuses and intensifies perception from artists who demonstrate accomplished technical craft and mature aesthetic vision.



Seeing Double 84

Dek Unu Wordplay

Artist Interview - Marlene Burns

Dek Unu loves your portfolio! Why this group of images?

Taking photographs of abstracts I see on city streets was literally accidental, from a fall. (How often do people do a face plant on a busy NYC street and then hang out to snap a photo?) People don't normally look down when they walk, but straight ahead. I discovered there is a marvelous array of abstract images hidden in plain sight on the sidewalks with their cracks, painted stripes and debris...and it largely goes unnoticed. The only downside is that you really need to have a guardian angel stop traffic and make sure you don't get run over when taking photographs! My initial goal was to make the ordinary extraordinary in presentation.

Your work is so well-crafted and stylistically consistent, what's the big idea behind your method?

That didn't present itself right away. I collected over 1,000 images before I started compiling them together. There was no intention in the beginning, over and above documenting these dynamic abstracts. The process over the last 5 years morphed from combining my paintings with the photos into just using pieces of the photographs to create abstracts on the computer. The method turned out to be similar to how I paint as an abstract expressionist. I keep in mind the same principles of good design and construct, then deconstruct, removing what isn't necessary...even if it is a gem. As a body of work and as individual offerings, my images are consistent in my style as an artist with bold color and/or edgy design. I am a composition freak. I firmly believe that an artist must learn good design principles and then, at best, challenge them. Totally ignoring them when you haven't learned them isn't possible. One cannot ignore what has yet to be learned.

Your images are pin-sharp. What camera(s) do you use?

All of these images were taken with an iPhone. I told no one for the first few years because of the stigma attached to equipment. iPhone cameras have improved greatly since I began this journey, and it's even cool to be an iPhoneographer these days! I have seen some outrageous images produced from such equipment and proudly share that information now.

Your work IS color - luminous, jewel-like color. How do you make that happen?

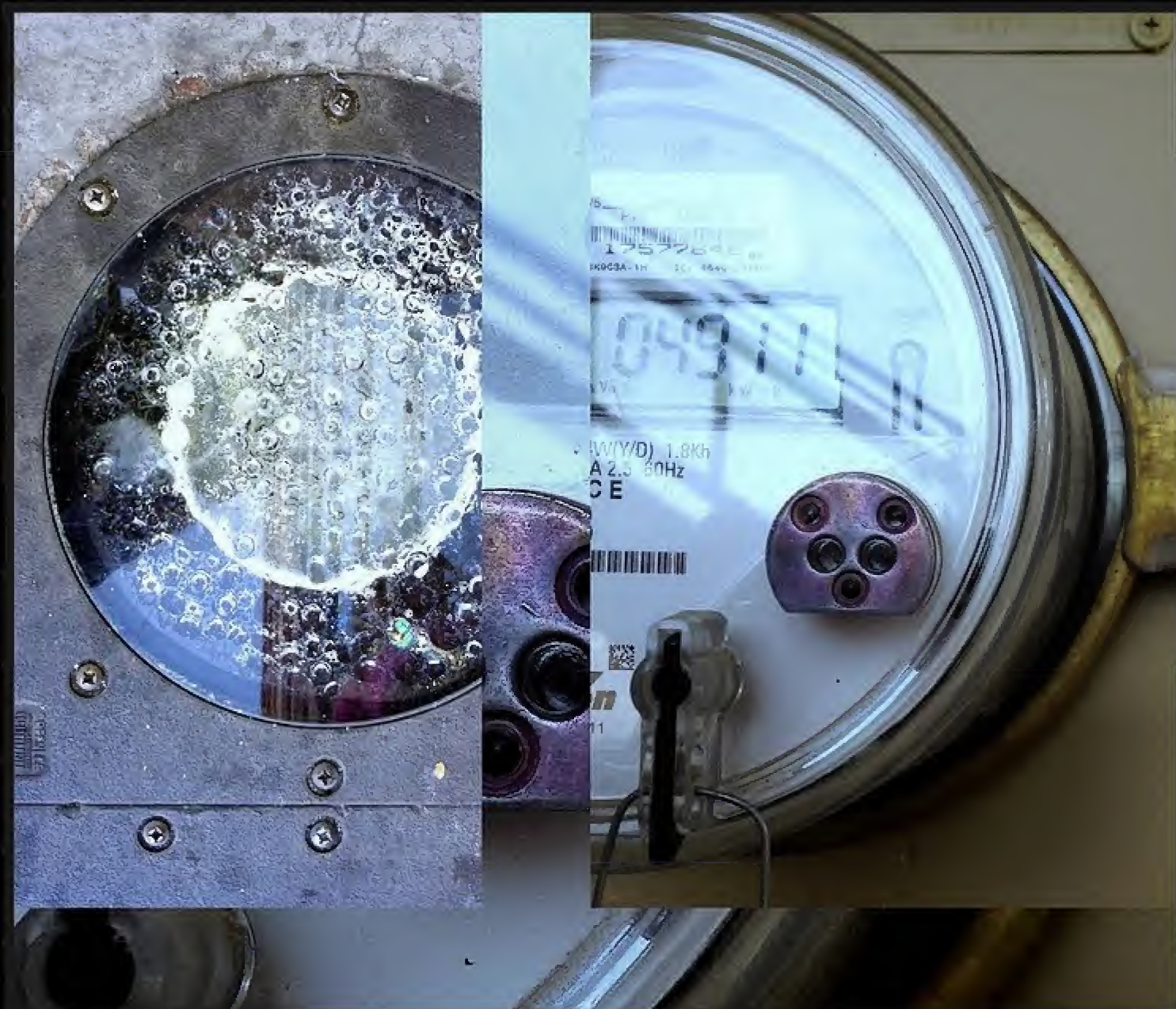
I am and always have been a colorist. I started out painting in oils but was forced to change over to acrylic paints during my college years (I have 2 degrees from University of Cincinnati, School of Design, Architecture and Art). I took a course in color physics and reproduced the Munsell color system by hand until I was blue in the face. By the end of that year in school, I could mix every color I could see or envision and not waste a drop of paint. I am attracted to vivid color. For this portfolio, I didn't photograph anything in HDR, but some images were pumped up a bit in Picasa on my computer or PS Express on the phone. No fancy programs for me. When rooting about in various cities, I will look for the color first since those images will become integral pieces of future compositions. Many images just get stored for future use, sometimes 3-4 years down the line, when the rest of the puzzle pieces are captured. Show me a neon green newspaper vending machine and I'm in heaven! The construction site near my home provided me with bright yellow and orange equipment. Playgrounds are a veritable candy shop for the eyes! Tucson, in general, is a very colorful city architecturally. I love going into the old presidio area to feast on the purple doors, turquoise windows, etc. As a design element, I love contrast, so black is present in many of my compilations. Black will naturally make other colors pop.

Your words are as absorbing as your images.

I have always been a great promoter of artists learning to express themselves and their art with words. There is a reason the general public is attracted to what we do....they are not as visual as we are. It's important to speak THEIR language! Historically, I am always attracted to artists who kept dialogues going, on what they were doing...van Gogh's letters to Theo, Mark Rothko, to name a few. After the fact critics, are, at best, just guessing at what the artist was trying to accomplish.

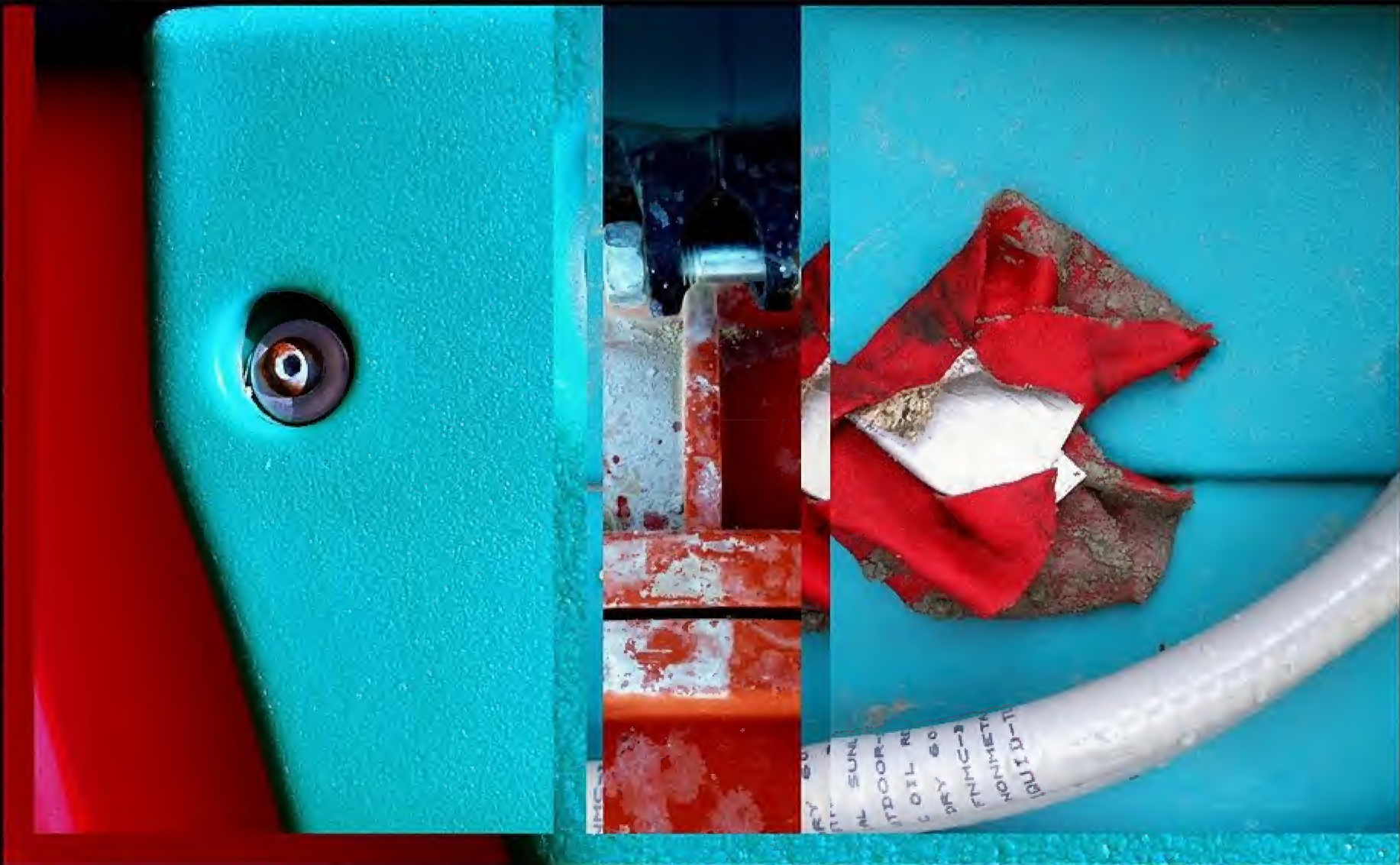
How do we get in touch with you and more of your work?

Website with a SAMPLING of the photography: www.art-marleneburns.com
Complete body of work for purchase: marlene-burns.pixels.com
Photography Blog: <http://urbanabstracts.blogspot.com/>
Books: <http://www.blurb.com/user/artistmarlee>
Contact info: info@art-marleneburns.com
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Seeing Double 58

The beauty in utilities



Seeing Double 28

Construction Sites and Schoolyards: Places to play for adults and children



Seeing Double 33

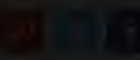


Urbanana

Urbanana: Photography by Michael Bunn

Urbanana: Photography by Michael Bunn

Looking down in a parking lot, 4 years apart, and seeing that road-killed banana





Compilations 16

Stenciled names, spray paint and equipment in construction site heaven



Compilations 15

Man-made wear and tear on man-made mailboxes and painted concrete streets



Seeing Double Lucky 13

Atmosphere: Aesthetics by Raylene Eames

Color: Aesthetics by Raylene Eames

Construction site beauty of hard steel and cold concrete



Seeing Double 62

Two Abstracts - Blackout by Margarete Baum

Two Abstracts - Blackout by Margarete Baum

Discovering Abstracts just by looking down





Seeing Double 16

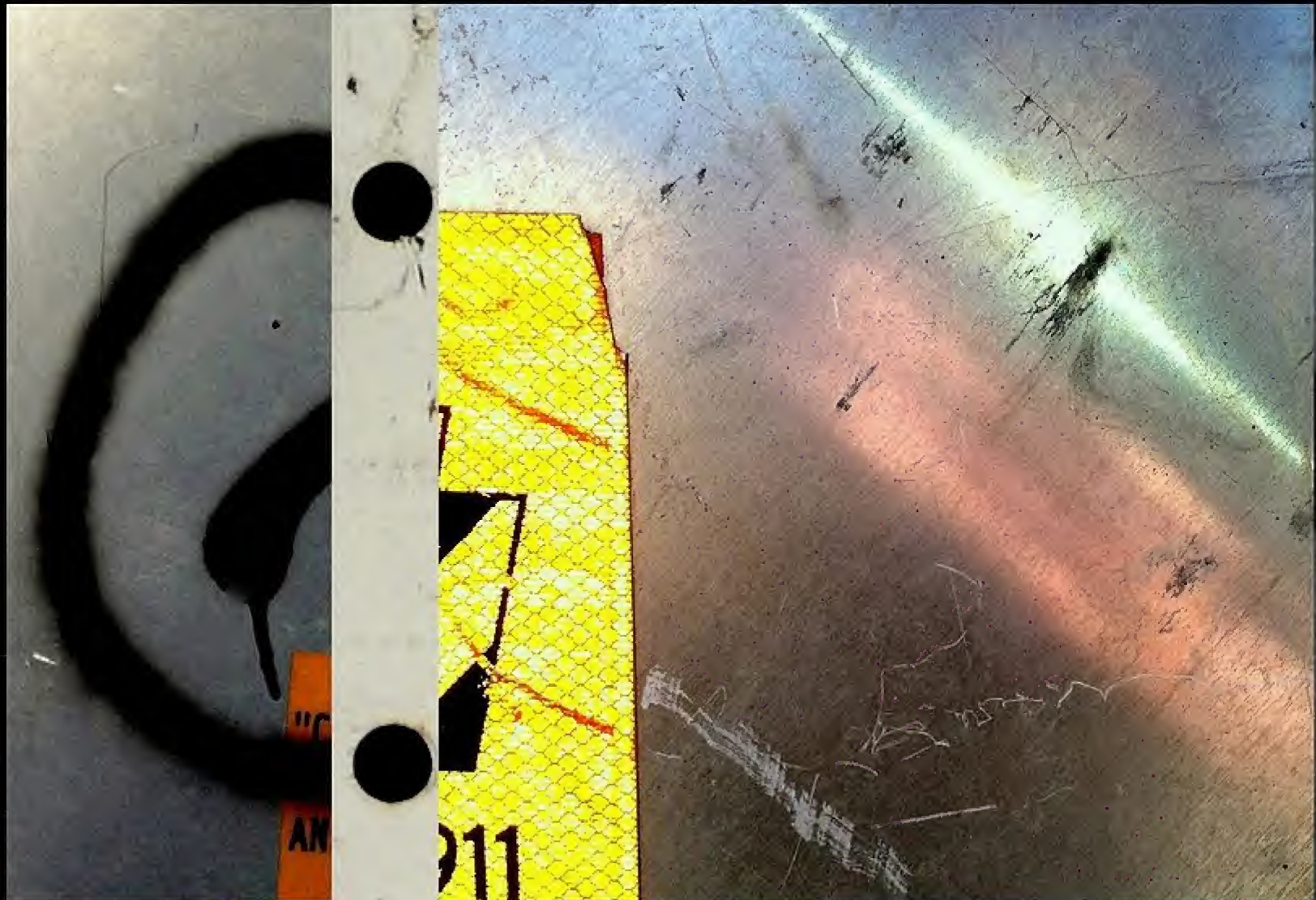
John Adams, 1990, Program by Neil White House

© 2014 by the artist or his estate. All rights reserved.

Photo: © Robert R. Taylor/Contrasto

Playgrounds are visual candy shops for the Abstract eye



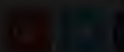


Seeing Double 22

Jan 2010 - Program by Melissa Dwyer

Jan 2010 - Program by Melissa Dwyer

Labels, spray paint and steel



Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

November, 2017

Featured Artist

Karen Boissonneault-Gauthier

"Plantlife Perspectives"

© 2017 Dek Unu Magazine, dekunumag@gmail.com



Artist Interview

Karen Boissonneault-Gauthier

Karen, you are a prolific image-maker. How did you come to pick this particular group of works as your Dek Unu portfolio?

I had a terrifically large bleeding heart plant which had so many blossoms, I started shooting some macro images of the flowers. I decided that dissecting the single flower, breaking it apart to change its shape, made for a more interesting image. Little did I know it would eventually provide me with the image of a face, like one sees in "Portrait In My Locket". It simply snowballed from there! I was then on the hunt for more, trying to find something unusual within the plants in order to portray an obscure and alternate reality. I like to think it became a happy accident that the images in this series were born.

You have said that you make your images "intuitively." Are you self-taught?

My work happens intuitively for sure and I'm definitely an autodidact! Although I do have the traditional photography + journalism degree, I didn't start this kind of visual art until around 2013.

Your work is a sort of dance among layers of imagery. You draw from such an assortment of visual sources! How do you know when an image is "done?"

Experimenting with layers, colours and textures is a self-inflicted challenge. I've become a bit of a souvenir hunter of textures. I think digital images don't easily reveal textures the way in which I like. That translates into knowing an image is done if adding one more layer obscures the original image too much for comfort.

Can you give an example of how that works?

I always need to recognize the image's starting point. Still, it has to be altered enough that some guess work is required of the viewer. "Wild Child" for example, is actually a poppy pod before blooming. It is overlapping a separate image of a boy. The soft spiny poppy hairs compliment the boy's wild hair, not to mention the position of his neck in relation to the pod's stem. Layering the hairs of each separate image suddenly gave the original poppy pod a completely different vibe and personality. It transformed into a sharp and unexpected character who might pierce or take a bite out of the viewer. Hence, the boy's vibrant grin had to stay!

Talk about your "work day." Are there tools, techniques, or tricks that help you get it done?

I have more cameras than I need. A high tech or simple camera doesn't make much difference to me. I use them all. I just try to find the light. I don't use a studio as I prefer the natural light. It always provides me with a surprise. Software is important, but I don't use presets. I use seven different programs in no particular

order of preference, uploading an image and manipulating it back and forth between programs. What software I use depends on the original image and what may best suit my desired result. I enjoy shooting in macro, tilt-shift, black and white or ultraviolet and altered luminescence, but I frequently find that simple is best.

Your work is all about "surprises."

Yes. I was sitting having a morning coffee; head down in thought and I was suddenly startled by a loud 'thunk' on the big kitchen window to my left. A bird had hit it while in full flight. It wasn't until that evening's sunset, now firing light through the window, that I saw illuminated this echoed image of a bird, showing its open wingspan of spread feathers before it was stunned to a halt. It must have been a large raven. The bird's image was invisible all day, until the sun blazed through it. For me the pane of glass became this beautiful surprise of texture and light. I rushed for my camera and began shooting. You can actually see a version of it in *Entropy Magazine* (<https://www.entropymag.org/the-birds-flesh-and-feathers>).

Where can we see more of your work?

My work finds homes in many literary journals and anthologies on line and in print. I love places like *Dek Unu Magazine* because these types of venues keep me thinking, changing my course and moving me forward with fresh ideas and prompts. My work can be found on my website at <https://www.kcbgphoto.com/>. Literacy is also important to me, so I use some of my visual art to design apparel for Shop VIDA in support of their 'Literacy for Life' program. I believe everyone should have the ability to read, write and learn basic math skills. I hope many will support this important cause!

<https://shopvida.com/collections/karen-c-boissonneault-gauthier>

What's on your calendar for the upcoming months?

Soon to launch is a book entitled *A Caged Mind*, in which I participated. Its focus is to create awareness about concussions and brain injuries. Fun fact ~ I spent many years as a competitive skater. Now with my kids playing hockey, I have always helped out as one of their team's bench staff. I am again the team trainer for my son's Midget hockey team. Hockey and concussions go hand-in-hand, so when I heard about this book project, whose models were body painted with their own personal concussion symptoms, I offered to photograph models. Take a sneak peak of my portraits for *A Caged Mind* at: <https://www.kcbgphoto.com/project-5>. Most important to me is to create art that makes a difference. If I can't help someone with my work, I'm not helping myself!



Wading



Seeing Red



Watering the Flowers



The Window To My Heart



Portrait in My Locket



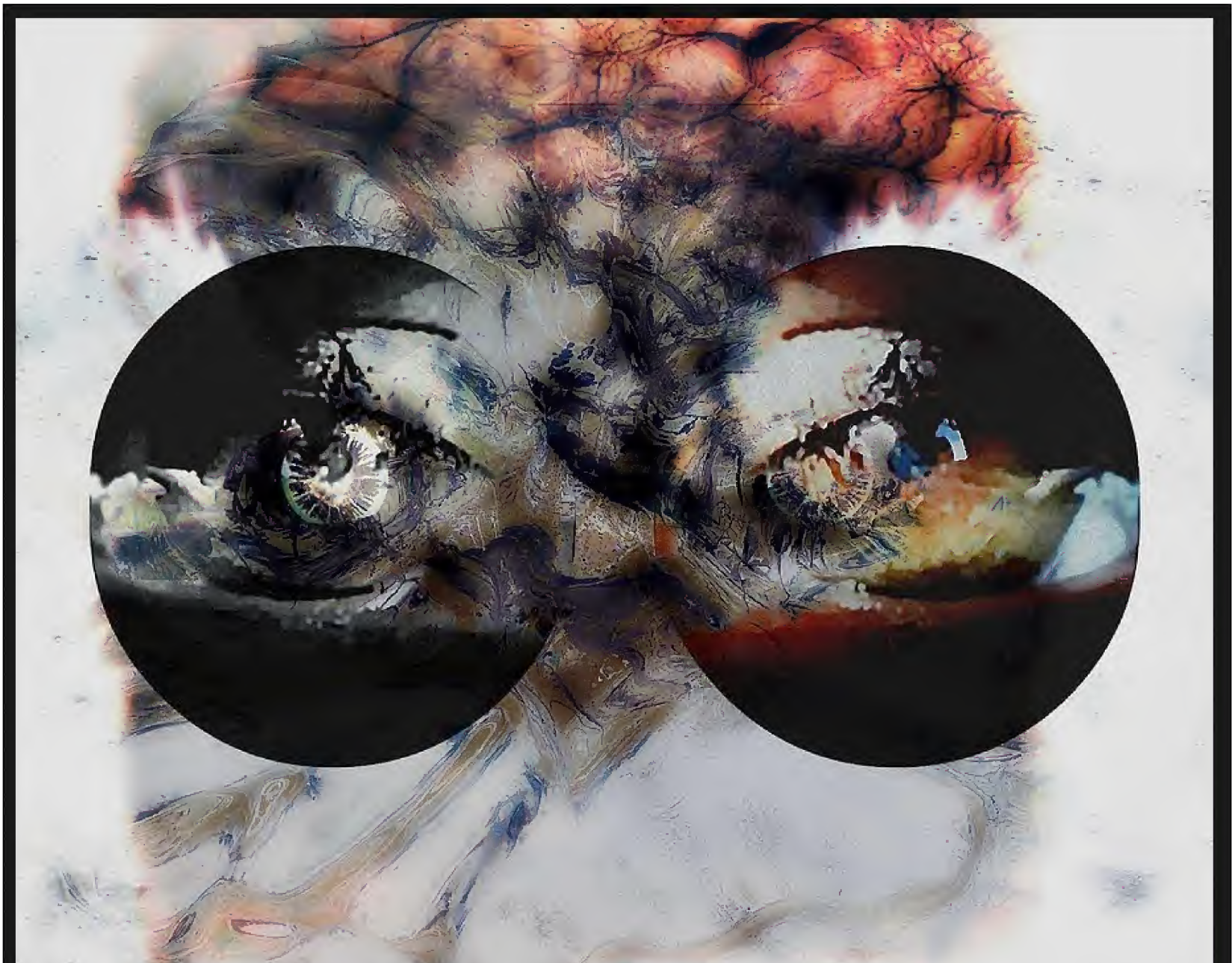
Wild Child



Parrot Tulip Nesting



Seeds of My Life



Owl Vision



Succulent View



Goat Poison

Dek Unu Magazine

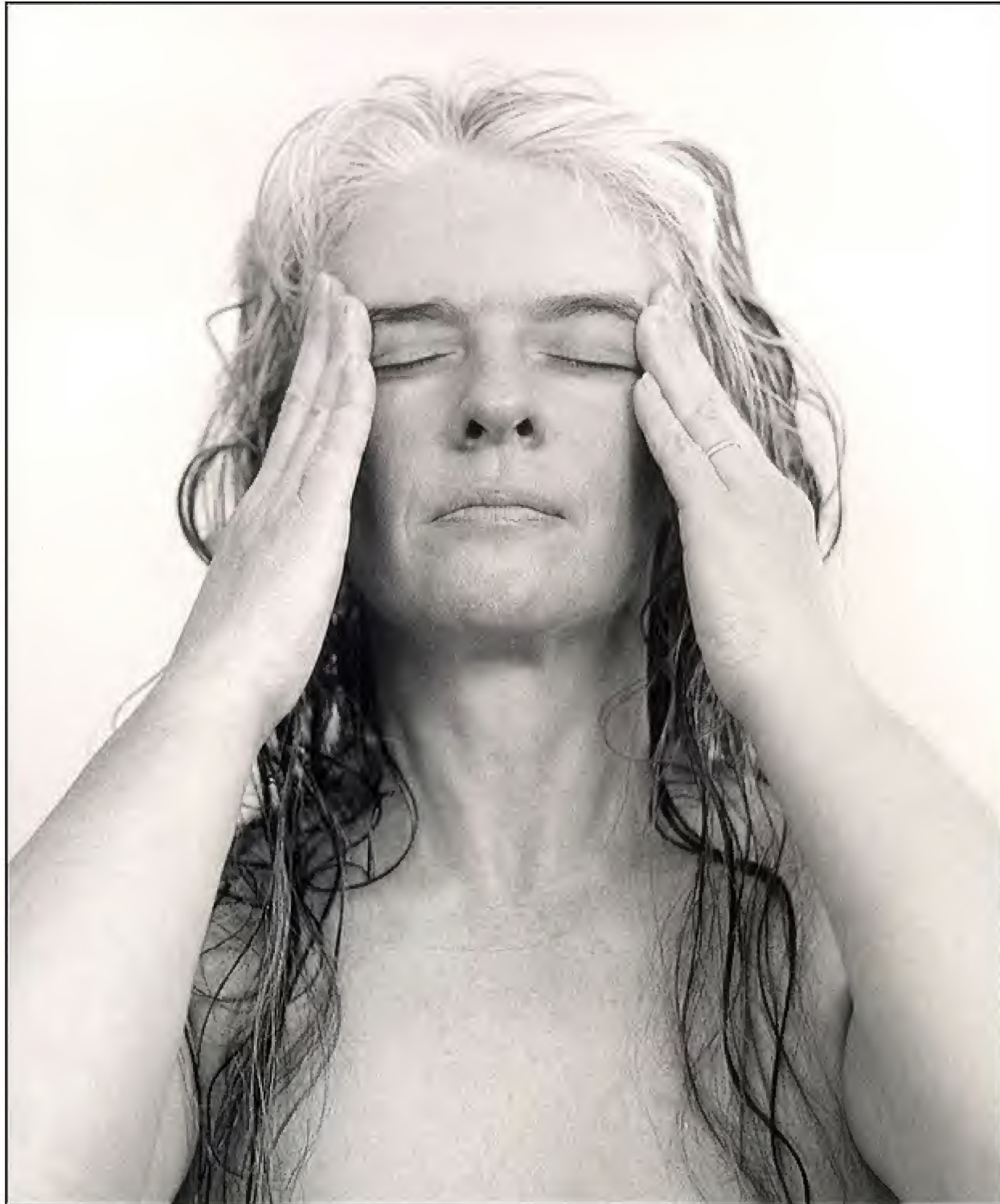
Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

December, 2017

Featured Artist
John Mahoney

"Portraits"

Cover Image: *Jane*
© John Mahoney



Dek Unu Magazine

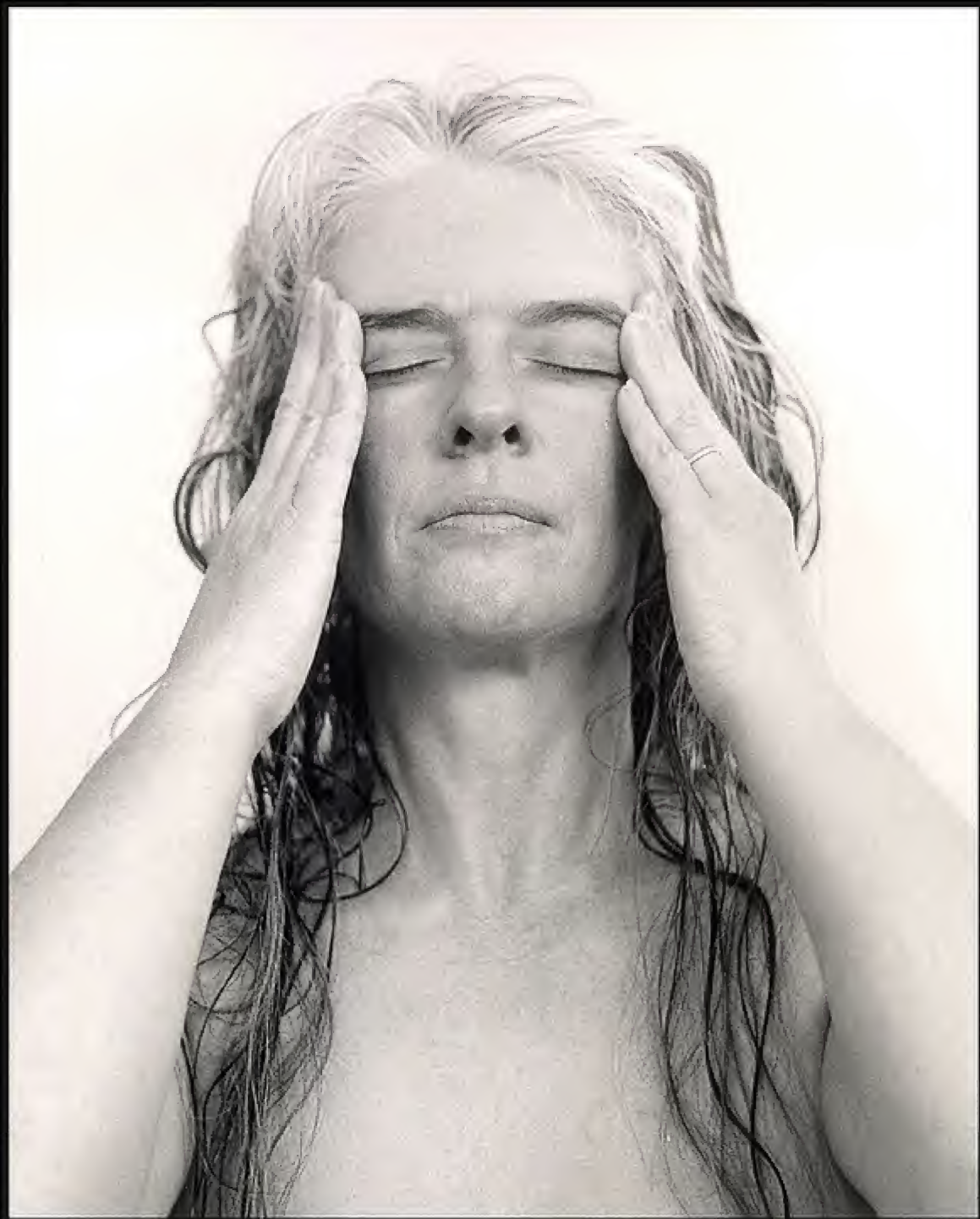
Dek
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Magazine

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Jane Birkin for *ELLE* magazine, 1981



NYC 1957



Glasses - Goddard College



Karina - Boynton, Quebec



Michel

Stanstead, Quebec Early 90s



Photo: [illegible] Linda Hogan • *Wings of the Dove* • [illegible]



Cigar Lady-Pembroke, Ontario



Brian O'Leary

Meriden, New Hampshire



London, England 1956



Rixford Knight



The Lucian Whitehills

Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney



John Mahoney, artist, writer, educator and publisher of the daily *Log Cabin Chronicles*, discusses more than seven decades of his real life as a photographer. To begin with....

I bought my first camera in 1943, when I was eight. It was made of black plastic and used #127 roll film.

To earn the money to buy it, I sold White Clover salve and Victory Garden Seeds door to door in my Eastside neighborhood in Newport, Vermont, on Lake Memphremagog, hard upon the Canadian border.

I loved that camera and have been a shooter since those World War 2 days...

Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney



Who influenced you to want to make photographs at such an early age?

My mother, Trudy Marquis Mahoney. She pretty much single handedly raised my younger brother Earl and me until the war ended and our Dad, 1st Sgt. Jerimiah Patrick Mahoney, came home.

She had worked in a photo studio when she was younger, and she always liked taking snapshots. When I showed an interest, she encouraged me.

I'm the one in the handcuffs. Mom always had a sense of humor. Earl is on the left, our friend Eugene Phaneuf is in the center. Both figure in my short story "I Dream of Jeannie."

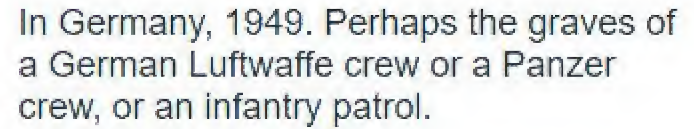
A vintage Kodak Pur-Rapid camera, featuring a black leather-like textured body and brass-colored metal accents. The camera is shown from a side-front perspective, highlighting the lens assembly with its aperture ring and shutter speed dial. The lens barrel is marked with 'KODAK PUR-RAPID' and 'CO. PAT. 1912'. The camera has a compact, rounded design with a prominent lens and a viewfinder on top.

We moved to Occupied Germany in June 1948 where I immediately became obsessed with having my own Leica 35mm camera.

Nice little camera, actually, but I've always hated the son of a bitch who conned my dad and screwed me out of my Leica.

Do any photos from those very early days still survive?

Do any photos from those very early days still survive?



In Germany, 1949. Perhaps the graves of a German Luftwaffe crew or a Panzer crew, or an infantry patrol.

Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

*So, now you had a decent camera,
how did you use it?*

I made a lot of photographs in the early 1950s but, sadly, due to several subsequent house floods and a barn visit by the neighbors' goats, few survive.

We were transferred to RAF Burtonwood near Warrington, England, in 1951, then back to the States -- Westover Air Force Base near Holyoke, MA, our "home" base.

In 1952, my brother Earl and I moved back to Vermont, to live with relatives and attend Newport High School. Earl was soon back in England and in 1953, at age 17, I graduated and enlisted in the Army for 3 years at the end of the Korean War.

I enlisted with the understanding I would be trained and serve as a combat photographer. Well, I did get the infantry combat training.

My Mom loaned me her beautiful little Retina 2C, which was stolen from my barracks at Fort Benning, GA in 1954.

I went cameraless until 1956.



Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

Tell about that Rollei you fell in love with. How did that come to pass?

I bought it in the U. S. Navy Ship's Stores in Grosvenor Square in London, England. \$125 with a hard leather case plus an extra \$10 for a Weston Master II light meter. It used the old Weston Film Speed ratings: ASA 125 was Weston 100, so you learned quickly to calculate the equivalencies. I was stationed at RAF Shellingford at the time, about 25 miles from Oxford, in the 53rd Ordnance Company of the 32nd AAA Brigade where I was chief clerk. Six of us shared a small flat in London, in West Hampsted, where we spent all our weekeend and free time. (Oh, those lovely English girls in their light summer dresses -- much better duty than in Orleans, France, where I had previously served in 1955. My Dad had gone through there 10 years before, with his 709th Combat Police company on the way to help liberate Paris.) Oh, that Rollei!! Focusing and film advance handle as smooth as silk. Large focusing glass screen with fold down magnifier. Front panel of the focusing hood folded for eye-level shooting. I eventually learned to load the 120 roll film on the run in speed shooting events.

I used it as my main camera at John W. Doscher's Country School of Photography in South Woodstock, Vermont once I was discharged in September, 1956. Most everyone else used 4x5 Linhof Technicas -- Doscher had the Linhof franchise and gave students a good deal, but stil way too rich this ex-GI. Eventually, I did buy a used 2x3 Speed Graphic. I was always torn between being a photojournalist out on the street and wherever the action was, or having my own



Summer 1956

My new Rollei in Denmark on final Euro Fling before being demobbed. Years later, I traded it in, along with a Contax 35mm rangefinder for a new Pentax SLR.

general studio back in Vermont. Of course, I didn't have a clue about the money thing in a new business in a small town in hard economic times. I just reckoned if you did good work, they would come...

Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

Still have any of those Rollei images?

I met this street vendor in a bar in Amsterdam. He was a friend of the pretty young Lady of the Afternoon and Evening who was chatting me up, drinking my booze (and my boat passage money back to my army post in England).

For years, I did a lot of street shooting. I always tried to look my subjects in the eye, smile, and nod. If they wanted to visit, I was glad to oblige.

When teaching at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont some years later, I proposed a course to get my students off the campus and out into the community. It culminated in the book, published by the The Goddard Press, (which I helped create), as ***Soul of Vermont***. It was funded by the Vermont Council of the Arts, with the largest grant they ever given out at that time.

Former Governor Philip Hoff, whom I had covered extensively during my years as a reporter at the statehouse with the Vermont Press Bureau and UPI, told me his family had kept the book on their living room coffee table for a long time.



Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

Well, this isn't street shooting!

This is the first photograph I made with my Rollei on the first field trip during the first week in photography school. I used an aluminum and bamboo tripod I bought for \$5 from a sergeant back at RAF Shellinford, in England.

During our periodic show and tells at the large round table in our main school classroom -- our school was in a converted barn -- I recall John Doscher, the Old Pictorialist, gushing "Ooh, this pleases me!"

Which of course pleased me all to hell.



Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

And this doesn't look like rural Vermont, John...



I had two Photo Assistant jobs in New York when I finished photography school, neither of which I much enjoyed.

The first was for a large 'house' with multiple studios and a number of camera operators.

They specialized in catalog fashion photography for Sears and T. Eatons. Flat, deadly stuff. I was one of the guys who mixed gallons and gallons chemicals, loaded 8x10 film holders, changed backgrounds, moved lights around.

The last job was in a small one-man operation in a tiny penthouse studio, for a guy named Irving Bart. Not a bad guy, but not a very creative photographer. He commuted in from New Jersey in his English sports car.

I photographed this young dancer/model to provide her some images for her portfolio, and to give me some more studio experience.

So 1958 rolled around with me jobless, moneyless, and looking for work (Irv and I parted with hard feelings after I hurled a \$10 box of cookies at his head and told him to go fuck himself). I was hired in Boston as a staff photographer at Harding, Glidden -- they had a society clientele and specialized in candid work with Rolleis. Good people, great work. I learned so much from them. I loved it there.

And I soon met Jane. Eighteen months later we moved back to Vermont, where I started a studio. Soon, we had four sons, who eventually produced 10 grandchildren. Jane and I have been together now nearly 60 years. When I threw that box of photo shoot cookies at Irv, who knew?

Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

*What happened with your hometown studio venture?
Where did your photography trip go from there?*

Lots of good images, many varied assignments, not enough income to support a wife, four small sons, car payments, insurance premiums, and a house mortgage obtained on the GI Bill (which is also how I afforded photography school).

I did candid weddings, children, portraits, yearbook photographs, news shots, ski wear fashion photography, product photography, underwater images, made pictures from airplanes. I even photographed the dearly departed in a funeral home so those who lived away could see what kind of send off the family had provided.

Same old story -- not enough money.

I became the Advertising Guy for the local Newport Daily Express, and also made news photographs for them (while keeping a small home studio for the odd client). Took a home study course in news writing. Got a lot of good feedback. With a friend, tried to publish a weekly tabloid-format newspaper. Good reception, not enough capital. We lost our shirts.

My pal Charlie had to leave his wife and five kids in Newport; I had to leave my family, too. He ended up in Bisbee, Arizona, as the city editor of a small paper. I was hired as State Editor of the prize-winning daily,



Valley News, in NH, where I also made a lot of photographs. Within 18 months UPI had hired me for their Vermont Statehouse Bureau; I soon was hired for the elite 3-man Vermont Press Bureau team operated by the Rutland Herald and Barre-Times Argus. And I kept making photographs while writing.

Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

The '60's. Oh, wow, man?



Here's Ladybird Johnson, wife of President Lyndon Johnson, during her anti-billboard tour in Vermont, which was the first state in the nation to ban almost all billboards. During my newspapering days, I had photographed a number of prominent national politicians including President Johnson (and GOPers Nelson Rockefeller, Barry Goldwater, and blah blah blah). About my last kick at the can was covering the 1968 Democratic Platform Convention in Washington and the National Convention travesty in Chicago. Lots of tear gas, lots of police violence, not much fun. In December, I resigned and took a job at Goddard College where my life soon was decently centered on teaching photography and community journalism.

Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

*You were at the top by Vermont standards at the Statehouse.
Why quit to work at an off-the-wall rural college?*

I left the grind of daily journalism because I had grown to despise the mainstream culture and politics I was writing about every day, and what I was becoming as a human being. Remember those days? The Vietnam War, the MyLai massacre, thousands of young American men fleeing to Canada. The culture wars, FBI spying, police brutality, assassinations in America. I saw it, I wrote about it, I experienced some of it personally.

I was overweight, drinking too much, smoking several packs of cigarettes a day, consuming three rolls of Tums a day -- I was on a bad path and had to get off, pronto. For my own salvation and for the sake of my wife and four sons.



When Tim Pitkin hired me as his Community Relations Officer I never intended to stay a long time. I had planned to stay just long enough to get my head together -- to evaluate where I was, and what I wanted to do now that I was in my 30s.

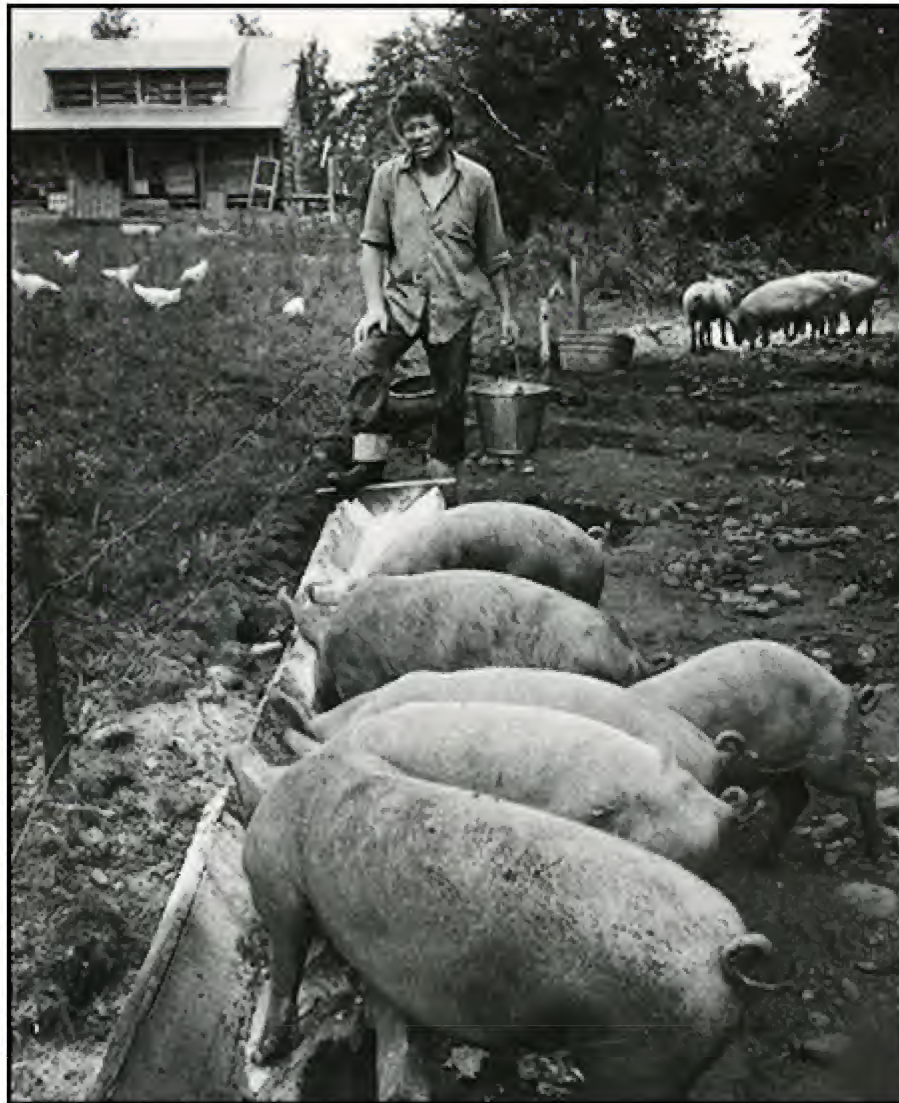
And then I was befriended by all these very smart, creative young people that life had not yet dulled and bent. I started sharing what I had learned about creative photography and community journalism. And I was introduced to Zen Buddhism and the teachings of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi by my friend and student Mark Abrams. Exciting times for me -- time for reinvention, re-youthification, and I earned my BA while there. Some of those students remain friends after nearly 50 years.

I stayed at Goddard College three and one-half years before moving to Canada to become a pig farmer.



Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

Did you say "Pig Farmer?" Is that actually you? Give me a break!



Our family of six emigrated to Boynton, Quebec, in April, 1972 -- about 12 miles north of our hometown of Newport, Vermont. I cobbled together a small temporary A-frame to live in while I built the log cabin that would be our home for the next 35 years.

For the next eight years, I would make few photographs, write few serious words. My life revolved around building, raising animals, gardening, putting up enough firewood to get us through the winter. I had never milked a cow until the day I bought Lady, our first Jersey. I had never butchered an animal until I cut the throat of my first pig.

By the early 1980s I started to write once again, and to make photographs -- I converted our root cellar into a darkroom. I think it fair to say that living in the bush for a decade had begun to heal me, and I was living beside the road and trying to be a friend to all mankind.

Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

So, you sold the farm and moved to Cobden, Ontario, to be nearer to 7 of your 10 grandchildren. What now?

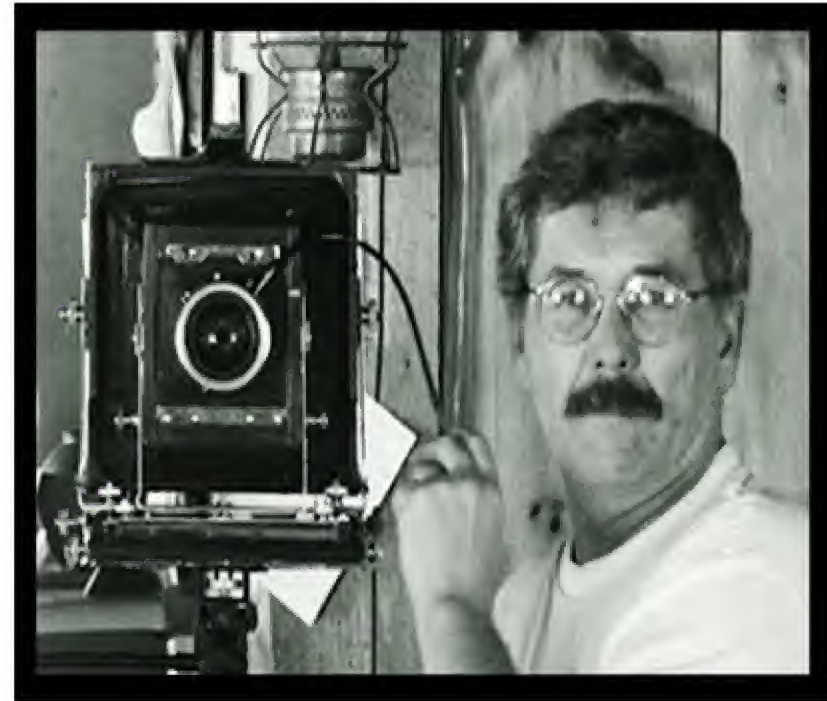
After more than 50 years of shooting analog film, from #127 rolls to 8x10 sheet film, in mid-1998 I got my hands on one of those new digital cameras -- a bulky but sweet Olympus D600 with a 3X zoom lens that could produce a full one-megapixel image.

The tech guy at Marlboro College Graduate Center in Brattleboro, Vermont, where I was working on a Master's degree in Internet Information Management, loaned me a brand new model for a week.

I was nearly 63 and it was infatuation at first image. He let me keep it for another week. I immediately ordered a compact Kodak DC220 (because of its smaller size), and bought a leather belly pack in which to carry it. We did Stonehenge together several months later, and that cemented our love affair.

I soon closed my darkroom, and have made only digital images -- thousands of them -- for nearly 20 years. Not one moment of regret.

Currently, I use a Panasonic Lumix DMC ZS50 which has a 30X zoom lens. And a belly pack. I rarely leave the house without strapping it on. I make photographs most every day and publish daily in my **Log Cabin Chronicles** (www.tomifobia.com) and on my Facebook page.



Pre-digital Selfie

Artist Interview - John Marquis Mahoney

Thanks, John, for sharing the details of your long strange trip. Any words of wisdom? Maybe a parting shot?



I have two photography rules:

- 1.) Be There.
- 2.) Be Packing.

And two thoughts I try to live by:

- 1.) Today I know nothing.
- 2.) Tomorrow, even less.

As the Lakota people believe: "Search for yourself, by yourself. Do not allow others to make your path for you. It is your road, and yours alone. Others may walk it with you, but no one can walk it for you. "

John Mahoney, age 82

With Native American-style flute he made from the stalk of a sunflower that he planted. He also makes/plays Japanese shakuhachi flutes.

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

January, 2018

Featured Artist

Vlad'ka Kočvarová

"Metamorphosis"

Cover Image: The City of My Soul
© Vlad'ka Kočvarová



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This Month

Dek Unu presents sensual and surreal portraits of the inhabitants of the dreams of featured artist, Vladka Kočvarová.

Ms. Kočvarová lives in Ostrava in the industrial northeast of the Czech Republic. Her work is clearly at home in the Czech Surrealist tradition while her methods are clearly rooted in the technology of the 21st century. Her iPhone is both her only camera her only editing workstation.



Black Swan



Imaginary Day



Metamorphosis



A Strangeness in My Mind



Trip To My Heart



Rebirth



Freedom



Soul Eating



Face of Nature



Behind Blue Eyes



The City of My Soul

Artist Interview - Vlad'ka Kočvarová

Hi, Vlad'ka...Introduce us to your work. Where do these beautiful and unusual images come from?

My photos are situated between fantasy and reality and my work is a kind of therapy. In each photo, I seek not only balance and calm, but also something that irritates and provokes me. I love rawness, sensuality, but I love gentleness and tenderness, too.

Are you formally-trained? Your work is very accomplished and suggests study in the visual arts in your background. Details?

I don't have a formal art school background although my soul has been artistic and philosophical by nature. I studied philosophy in school but art to me is a passion and an outlet. I paint, draw, and write; I studied piano for many years and I still play. I have always been interested in photography. When I started, I made digital photos... nature, concerts... with conventional equipment, but I started creating this kind of work when I bought my first iPhone.

When did that happen? Were you an "early adopter?"

My boyfriend bought me my first iPhone 5 in 2014 and that's how it all started. Now I am using iPhone 6. I began with the familiar, shooting street, nature, and everything else that seemed interesting to me. But soon I slowly began to discover various applications that opened my door to the creative world of iPhoneography. Everything around the mobile photo captivated me. I can say that the iPhone really changed my photographic life. I started watching Facebook photography groups and discovered photographers and their creations on Instagram. I am so surprised by how many world class photographers are taking pictures with their mobile phones and by what they can create with them.

It seems incredible to many of us that you do not off-load your images or any manipulation tasks to a "real" computer.

Yes, I do all the manipulation of my photos on my mobile device. I don't import "foreign" components, I take all photos myself. Most mobile photography competitions require that photos be edited only

on the mobile device.

Are you the model for the images in this portfolio with a female subject? They are a huge step up from typical cell phone "selfies!"

Yes, I'm mostly the model for my photographs. My ultimate goal is to find new faces for my future work. The blue-eyed man in this portfolio is my boyfriend, my biggest supporter and best critic.

You use an assortment of different editing apps. Do you have a favorite or "go to" app to recommend?

I love to play with new apps. I don't want to get stuck in a creative routine. But these applications I use most often: Union, Mextures, Stackables, Photoshop Fix and TinType. All these fit my photo style.

I have no work routine. Creative mood or ideas I get anywhere. It can be at the bus station, on my walk, or at home. There are no limits to creativity. Mobile art is amazing, I can create anywhere!

Where do you find inspiration or support?

My city, Ostrava, is an inspiration to me. It is a very industrial place and is mistaken by many people for its cold and hard environment. However, it has a soft aspect that can contribute a richness to self development. People are more expressive and welcoming and although one might see this city as more depressed, as an artist I see big potential. What's more inspiring than people working hard and living life with their heart?

For support, I am part of Czech FB group named "Mobilní fotografie cz/sk" and many international mobile groups, among which my favorites are: @mag_mobileartgroup, @grupamobilni and @TheAppWhisperer. And Instagram is brilliant, what a perfect way to share photos!

What are your plans for the upcoming year?

I'm planning a solo exhibition which I would like to have in some industrial place in Ostrava. Please keep up with me at: <https://www.instagram.com/wphotonick> and <https://www.eyeem.com/u/wnick11>

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

February, 2018

Featured Artist

Saeed Mohammadzadeh

"Lake Urmia"

Cover Image: Space Ship
© Saeed Mohammadzadeh



Interview - Saeed Mohammadzadeh

Welcome, Saeed. Such beautiful images from such a disaster!

We swam in the lake when we were kids. Because of the high salt content it was very safe-almost impossible to drown. About three years ago, I went back to the shores of the lake with friends and saw deeply frustrating scenes of the water crisis. The lake seemed to me like a man who is dying but who cannot speak for himself or call for help. On that day I decided to take pictures of all the parts of the lake so that I could give the people of the country intact images of Lake Urmia as it disappears. My point of view is to take pictures to preserve the beauty of the lake and to protest against the damage.

Several of your images are of very large boats aground, rusting away. There must have been commercial boat traffic on the lake in the past.

Yes, at one time those ships played an important role in the movement of passengers between the two provinces of East and West Azarbaijan. With the drying of the Lake Urmia, shipping has gradually decreased from the boom times of the lake's ports and Sharifkhane, the most important and profitable port, was closed. Today, several ferries, recreational boats, and sailboats rest in different parts of the lake. There was never fishing in the lake due to high salt level, but brine shrimp, algae, and food plants still support wildlife; although, if the water is gone, salt, heavy metals, and other pollution will threaten a 500 km radius from the lake.

Your images might be called nat-geo perfect: carefully composed, in deep focus, vibrant color, and that amazing light. How do you do it?

I keep it simple. I use 35mm digital equipment, a Nikon D-810 camera body and Nikkor 14-24 mm f/2.8 wide-angle zoom. I work from a tripod and occasionally add a filter - ND1000.

What about post-production or editing? Do you use any special software or digital tools?

I keep it simple there as well. I stick to Adobe Camera Raw in Photoshop.

Your work fits well in the tradition of nature photography. Are there contemporary inspirations or influences on your work?

I've always been inspired by Iranian photographers, particularly Behrouz Al Naddaf, who lives in France. I also appreciate Steve McCurry, an American, who has unique photographic projects.

Talk about your life as an artist in Iran. Are you part of an arts interest community?

I am the Director of the Artist's Basij Photography Group and I am in charge of photography training, photo editing courses, and photography trips. And I am also the secretary of the Marand Photography Association, where we do various activities with other colleagues. I teach private courses, group courses, and workshops for photography training and photo editing.

Do you see any hope in the future for the lake?

This ecosystem has been internationally registered by UNESCO as a protected area. The Iranian Environment Organization has identified most of the lake as a national park.

The rescue of Lake Urmia was emphasized after the formation of the government of President Hassan Rouhani and the Urmia Lake Rescue Task Force was established under the management of the first vice president. Issues such as confronting the micro-organisms, the agricultural situation, and the pattern of cultivation in the area and the large number of wells have been investigated. Some experts believe that the restoration activities carried out in this period, along with popular support, have reduced the process of destruction of Lake Urmia and in some areas have improved the conditions. But, the condition of the lake remains critical.

What are your plans for the upcoming year?

I plan to photograph the islands in Lake Urmia which may require that I stay for several days on the islands. I will also travel to Iran's deserts, places that are lifeless but that are also full of delightful forms and shades of light. Please follow my work on Instagram @saied_mohammadzadeh























Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

March, 2018

Featured Artist

Peter van Stralen

"Odd Bodies"



Cover Image:p216D
© Peter van Stralen

Artist Interview - Peter van Stralen

Wow, Peter! These poses are incredible! Tell us how you work together with your models to develop such creative results.

My collaboration with dancers started a long time ago. I was fascinated by these young women because they have the ability to combine power with grace in a very natural way. They are my muses; with their efforts and their enthusiasm they help me to produce these images. So, these images are not just my images but also our images.

A photoshoot usually starts with a few rather embryonic ideas in my head and we take it from there. Some of these embryonic ideas turn out to be completely useless, mostly because they are anatomically impossible to realize - even for professional dancers. But other ideas are workable; so, by trial and error we move forward until these ideas get their final shape. This process is the best part of all. At times, we laugh a lot during each photoshoot, because this is playing, just like children do. The great pianist Arthur Rubenstein once said, "You should play the piano as if you are whistling a tune." That is how I feel about my work.

Some poses could easily be flowing dance moves. Do you use music? Others are complicated constructions that must take a long time to perfect. An ordeal for your models?

Yes, some of the poses may seem to be an ordeal for the models. But then again, these are dancers and dancers love a challenge. They like to push the boundaries of their bodies and to get to know their bodies even better during a photoshoot. So sometimes they even encourage me to continue, just when I am about to give up, feeling a bit sorry for them.

I enjoy listening to music when I am working, but only as a background sound to get into the right atmosphere. I never use it as a tool to create the poses themselves.

Your models are all anonymous. Is there a reason why?

There are two reasons for this. First of all, if I were to add a face to my image, the image would become personalized. Viewers might say, "Wow, she has great eyes," or, "Hey look, there's Judy, Nancy, Mary ..." et cetera, and I don't want that. I want the viewer to focus on the body forms, without getting distracted by a face. The human face has such a strong attraction that I have to omit it to make people concentrate on the body. I'd like to think of myself as a kind of two-dimensional sculptor who loves these women. Not just because they can be beautiful and sexy, but also because they are strong, versatile and basically a mystery to me.

To put things into perspective: I have a wonderful relationship with my wife Annemieke who has been most supportive and loyal to me for more than 27 years...

The second reason is a rather practical one. As we all know, the internet is not a very safe place for photographs. Sometimes, pornographic sites hijack my images and show them on their own sites for some strange reason. In order to protect the personal integrity of my models, it is safer to keep them anonymous, so that no one can hurt them in any way.

In your images, your sense of composed space shows you are formally-trained. Yes?

My city, Arnhem, NL, has an Academy of Arts, ArtEZ, where I first trained as a graphic designer. The design curriculum included photography. I had a very good teacher there who opened up the world of photography to me. The combination of technical skills with creative possibilities fascinated me and gradually I realized that photography had become my passion. The academy had helped me to explore my creativity, now it was time to find the proper tools to use it. Since then I have been working as an autonomous photographer and in the end, this series ODD BODIES became my "magnum opus."





von Stralén

Direct image, image for artist's book

©2005, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt

p356D

Created with High Dynamic Range



p216D





Don't forget to check out the other photos in the series.

Don't forget to check out the other photos in the series.

p357D

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p204D



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p239A

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p365D

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2002 large image for 2004 video

p288A

Artist Interview - Peter van Stralen

You live and work in Arnhem. a city of 150,000. What is the arts environment like there?

There is a thriving art scene in Arnhem. In addition to the graphic arts division in which I trained, ArtEZ has a dance division, an excellent fashion division, a free arts and a 3D industrial design division. Apart from that, ArtEZ also has a conservatory for all kinds of music and a theatre school for young, aspiring actors. My models are mainly dancers from Arnhem schools and companies, though some of them come from Germany, Switzerland, Spain, and Italy.

Your work fits well in the deliberate, "high craft" photographic tradition. Do you teach?

I don't think of myself as a craftsman. There are many, many more photographers who are far more skilled than I am. I have never been an official teacher, though I did teach photography - on a voluntary basis - to unemployed people in order to give them an opportunity to explore their creativity through photography. These classes were part of a governmental project that aimed to offer unemployed people a bit more than just a monthly payment. Sometimes I am also a juror for photo contests, exhibitions, and the like.

You use abstract titles, just letters and numbers.

My photographs have no real titles, just a number for my archive. The reason for this is the fact that I do not wish to lead the spectator towards my own personal view on the image by giving it my title. Instead, I want the viewer to make up his own mind about what **his** title might be. In fact, I do not feel that my images are suitable at all to have a title. Looking at my photographs, I do not think of titles such as "Moon over Paris" or "Arizona Desert Highway." Instead, I think of my whole ODD BODIES series as a kind of sketchbook with hundreds of sketches in it that need no specific titles.

What about your technical systems, equipment, software, methods?

Here is my studio, small and simple. I use a Nikon D3, a 2.8/24-70mm G ED Nikkor lens, and Bowens flash equipment.

I have an iMac and I use Photoshop CC 2018 plus Camera RAW for a little bit of post-production; I use the duotone settings in Photoshop to create a smoother skin tone for the nudes and then I change the image into RGB format.

Apart from that, I do not use any filters, special effects or programs. No frills.



A great mystery, both for makers and viewers of art, is how an artist decides when a piece is done. What factors influence your decisions as you work?

I keep my images quite direct and simple. To me, less usually means more, which makes me a minimalist. As a minimalist, I try to eliminate any superfluous elements from my pictures in order to create a kind of clarity which enables the essence of the image to come forward, just as a sculptor removes any unnecessary parts of the rough stone while at the same time working with his material rather than against it.

Form and composition play a very important role in my work, so I prefer B&W photography. I feel that, in my kind of photography, color only distracts the viewer. "If you take an image of a naked person in color, you get a picture of flesh; if you take an image of a naked person in black and white, you get a picture of forms."

In the ODD BODIES series, I have focused on themes such as alienation and strangeness by photographing the female figure from a different perspective than the more usual classical or erotic nude.

In ODD BODIES, women are no longer familiar and sensual, but rather pleasantly strange and fascinatingly versatile. I want to show the female body in a way that makes you wonder again about seemingly ordinary forms. That is why this photo series is a reflection of my astonishment and admiration for women in general and these dancers in particular.

What artists, past or present, get your attention?

In my teens, I was fascinated by surrealist painters such as Salvador Dali, Paul Delvaux, and René Magritte. Later on, I discovered Edward Hopper, whom I still admire very much. Sebastiao Salgado is one of my favorites. He is not just a brilliant B&W photographer but also an impressive person with a mind-boggling career. Apart from Salgado, there's Henri Cartier-Bresson and Dutch photographers Erwin Olaf and Anton Corbijn. Music also plays a very important role in my life: From Bach, Mozart and Beethoven to minimalists like Steve Reich, John Adams and Philip Glass. And, yes, German choreographer Pina Bausch is one of my favorites too.

Thank you, Peter. What's in your future, new projects, collaborations, exhibits?

At the moment, there are no specific plans or projects in the pipeline. There is only a chance that I might exhibit my works in Basel, Switzerland, in the year 2020 (!).

You should know that I am a slow worker: some photographers shoot hundreds of photographs in one day, whereas I shoot fewer than 1,000 images in one year. Dutch photographer Paul Huf once said, "Look a little bit more and then you shall have to take a lot less photographs." Nowadays, it is common practice to shoot half a dozen frames or more in one second. People just press the button, hoping that something good will come out of it eventually.

That's not how I like to work. I prefer to look, observe, and not to play Russian Roulette with my camera.



Where can we find more of your work?

You can find more of my works at:

- Homepage: <https://www.petervanstralen.nl/engels>
- Photo Book: "ODD BODIES" <https://www.petervanstralen.nl/engels/nieuws>
- Buy prints: <https://www.petervanstralen.nl/engels/shop/>
- or at: Saatchi Art: <https://www.saatchiart.com/search/user?query=Peter+van+Stralen>

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

April, 2018

Featured Artist
Gregg Morgan

"Moments In Stillness"

Cover Image: The Stranger
© Gregg Morgan



Artist Interview - Gregg Morgan

Welcome, Gregg. Deeply seen images! How did you get here?

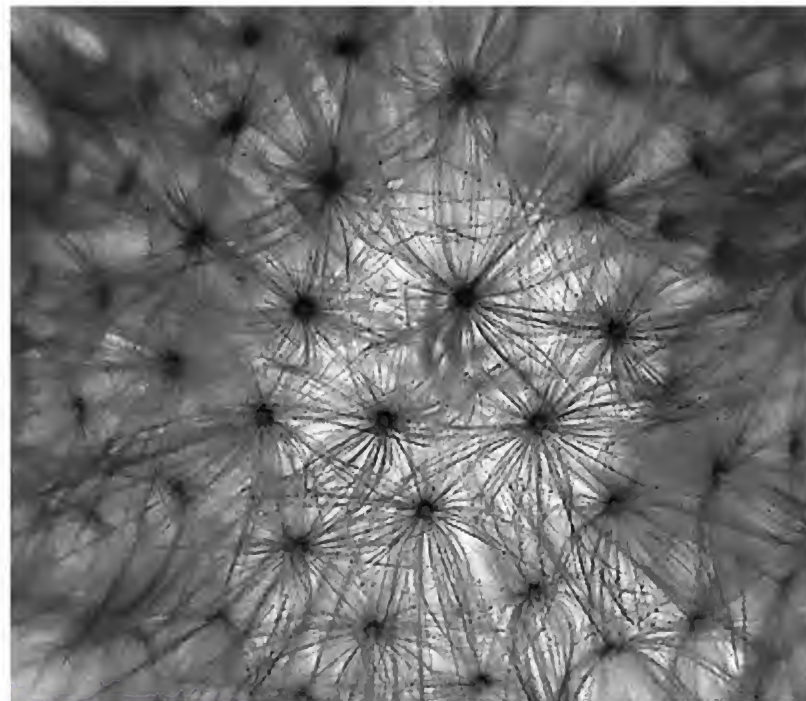
From before I could read, I discovered the power and impact of imagery thanks to *Time Magazine*, *People*, and *National Geographic*. Recently, I have been diagnosed as having Autism, specifically Autistic Spectrum Disorder... my photos have been telling me this for years, I just wasn't listening.

I earned my BFA at the Art Institute of Virginia. The Art Institute (AI) not only understood my eccentric way of seeing the world and my unique approach to problem solving, the instructors also helped me to stop fighting my thought processes and to begin to nurture them. I can still hear my instructors' voices in my head... "Yeah, that's great work, what else you got?" and "Only when the rules are understood can you break them!" and "What about other perspectives?"

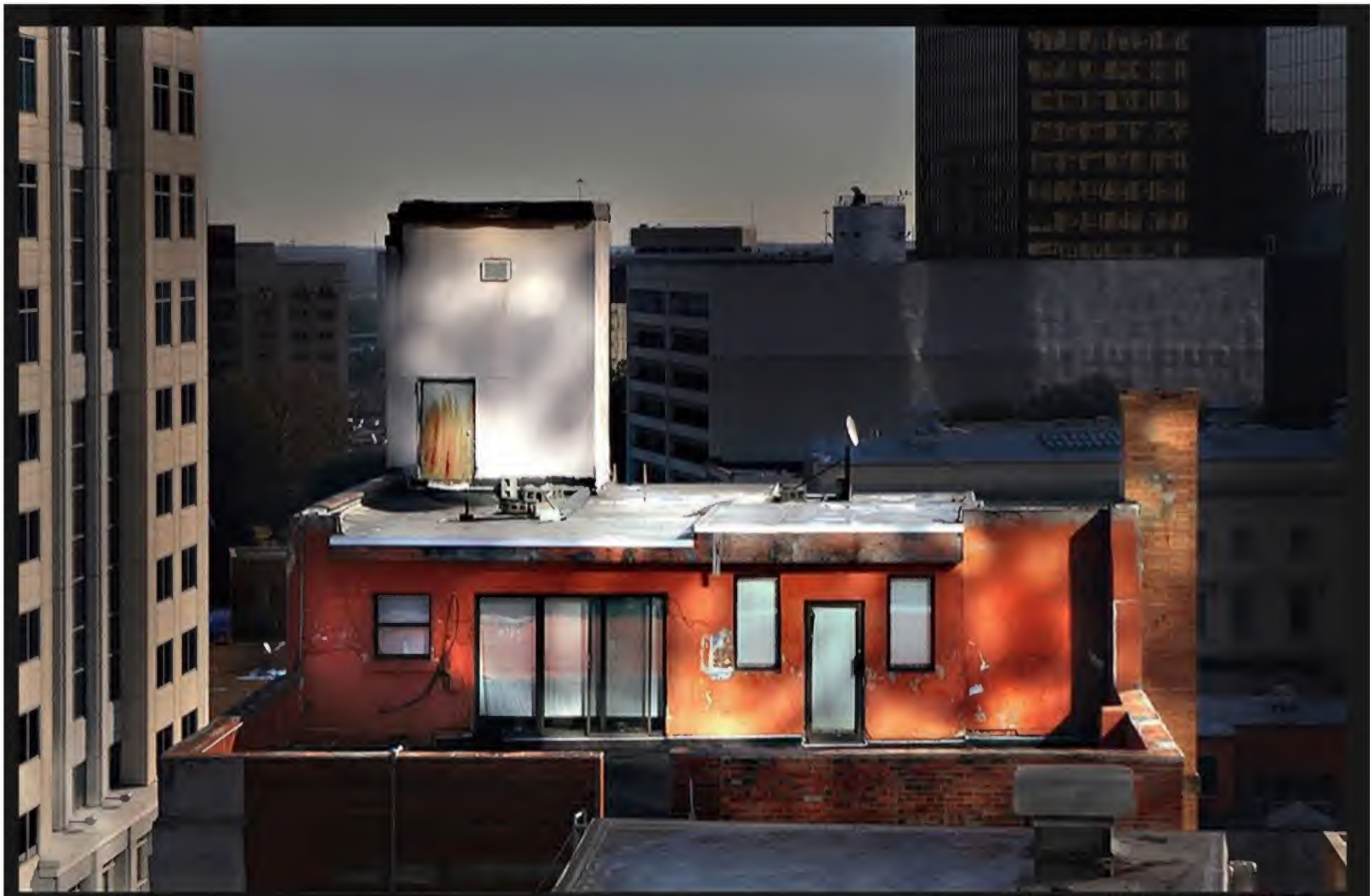
It can't have been easy. Most of us, even those who consider themselves neurotypical, brought illusions to University or formal training that were bashed in the process of getting the degree.

School was a scary, wonderfully, dreadfully, amazing place for an Aspie. The instructors were bastards (brilliant crazy and driven bastards) forcing me to work across all mediums and techniques, most of which I had been ignorant of before. "Why does a photographer need drawing or painting or sculpture?" I see it in retrospect – it was never really the act itself or the finished project, but in the doing. To quote Thoreau, "Not until we are lost do we begin to understand ourselves." Through AI I learned how to apply color theory, to incorporate the elements of design, to analyze and critique my own work more stringently – I learned to slow down and 'see' the image before even touching the camera.

The Art Institute environment encourages freaks like myself to not only accept their understanding of their unique perspective on reality; but to push and stretch and shove and expand that perspective to a new place that can only come from within.



From the Renaissance Masters I have learned to appreciate Light's character, tone, and quality. Science has taught me that the properties of light are not much different than that of water, white light is not white, black is the absence of light, and light has weight (that one still messes with my head.) Photographic technology allows the freedom to create with a camera that which only my mind can envision. In reality, our eyes are limited to seeing only those surfaces which reflect light - the camera allows us to see the darkness coming from the unseen surfaces. My camera allows me to bend time and space, to capture motion in a single frame, to manipulate the laws of physics, to bring chaos from order, and vice versa.



World's Best Apartment



Negative Bubble



Stranger's House



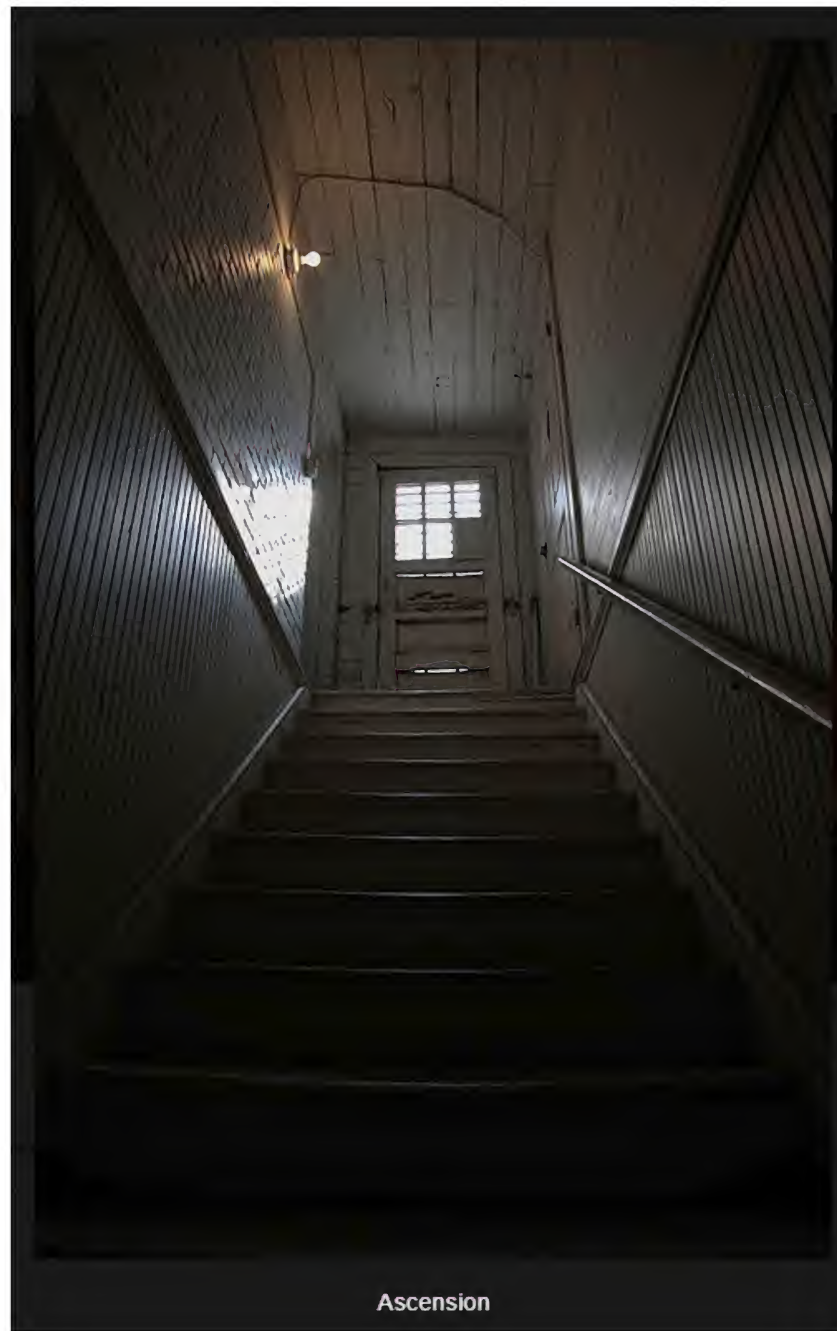
The Grove



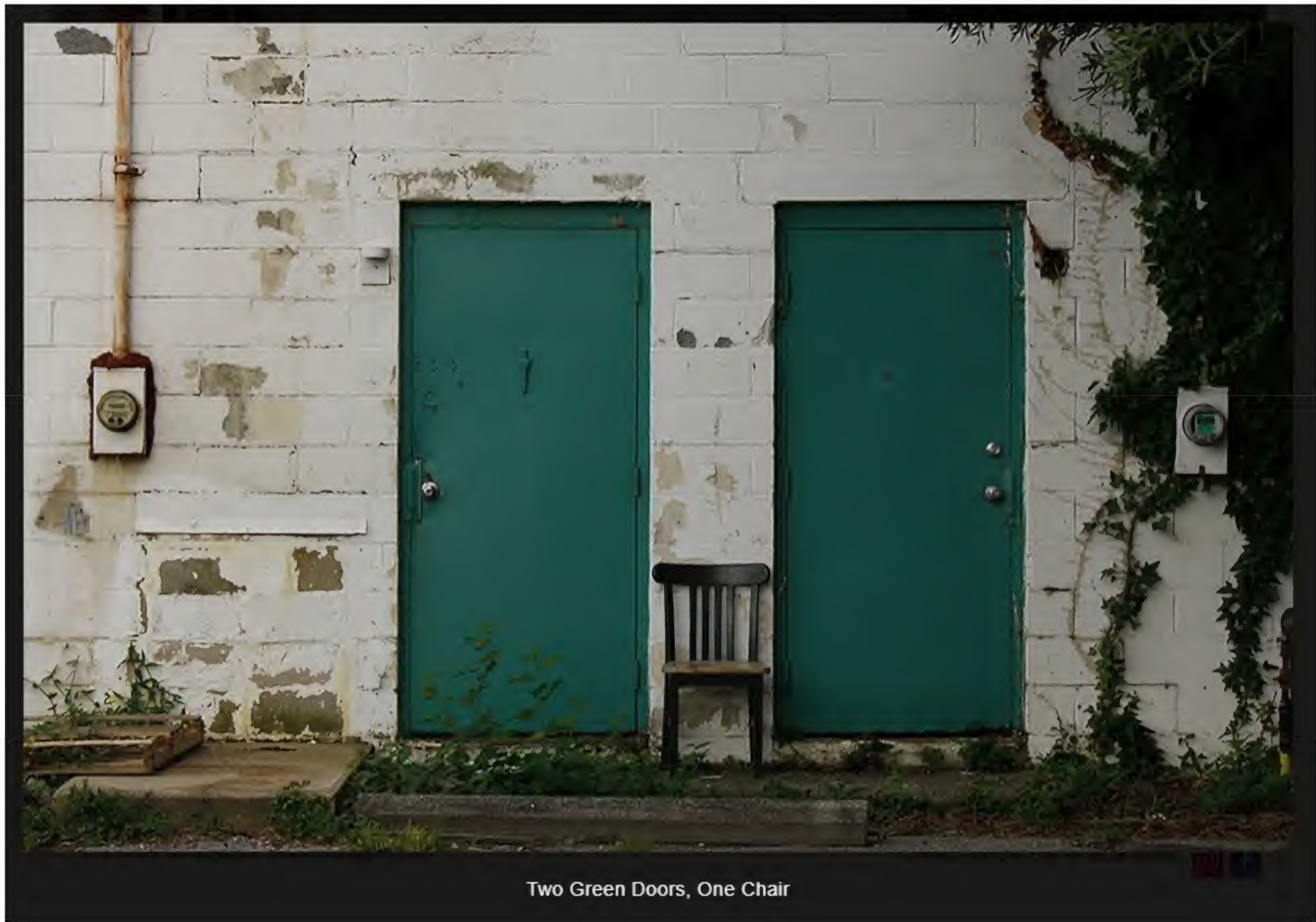
Bright Fence - Splash



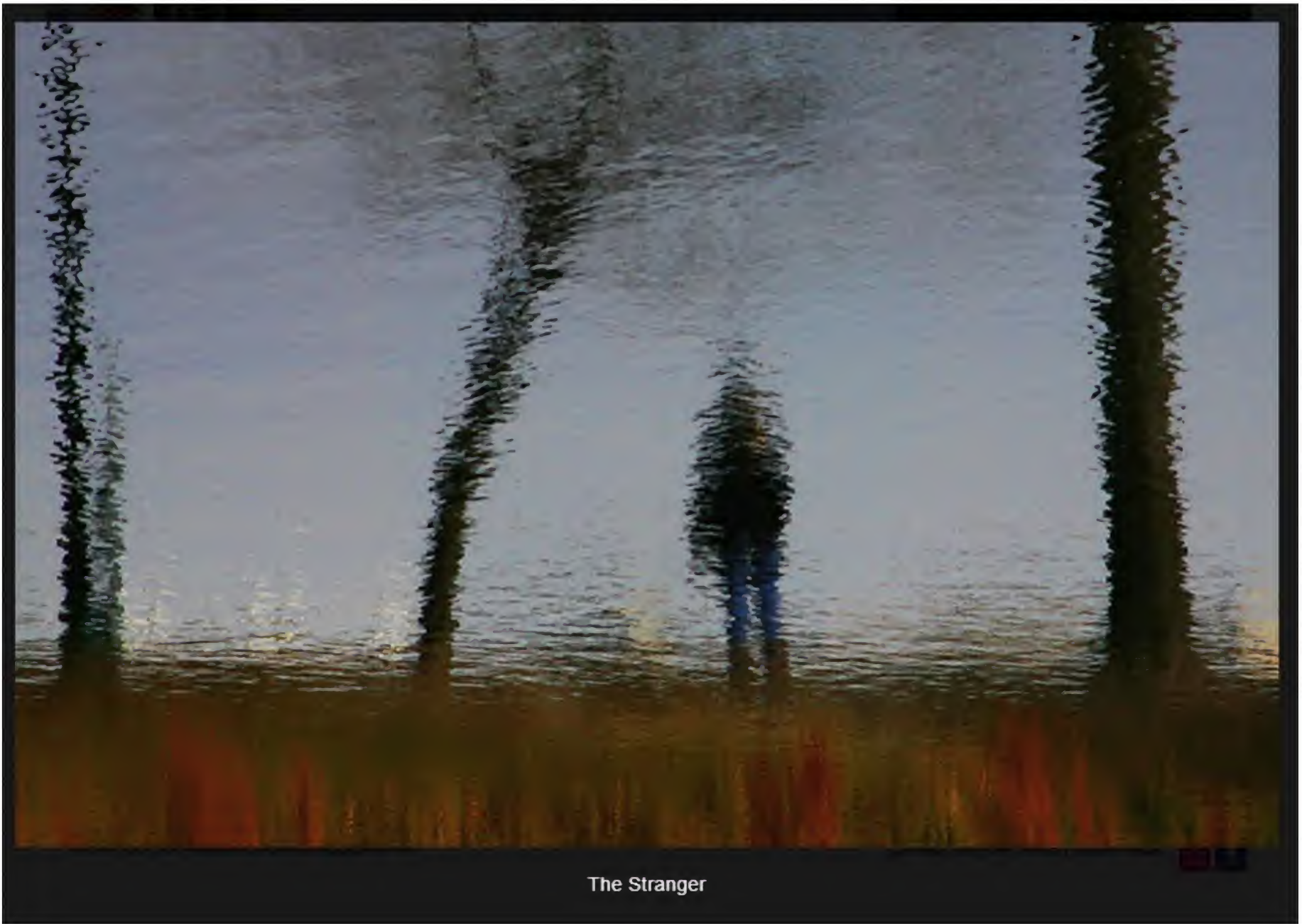
Cubist Smokestack



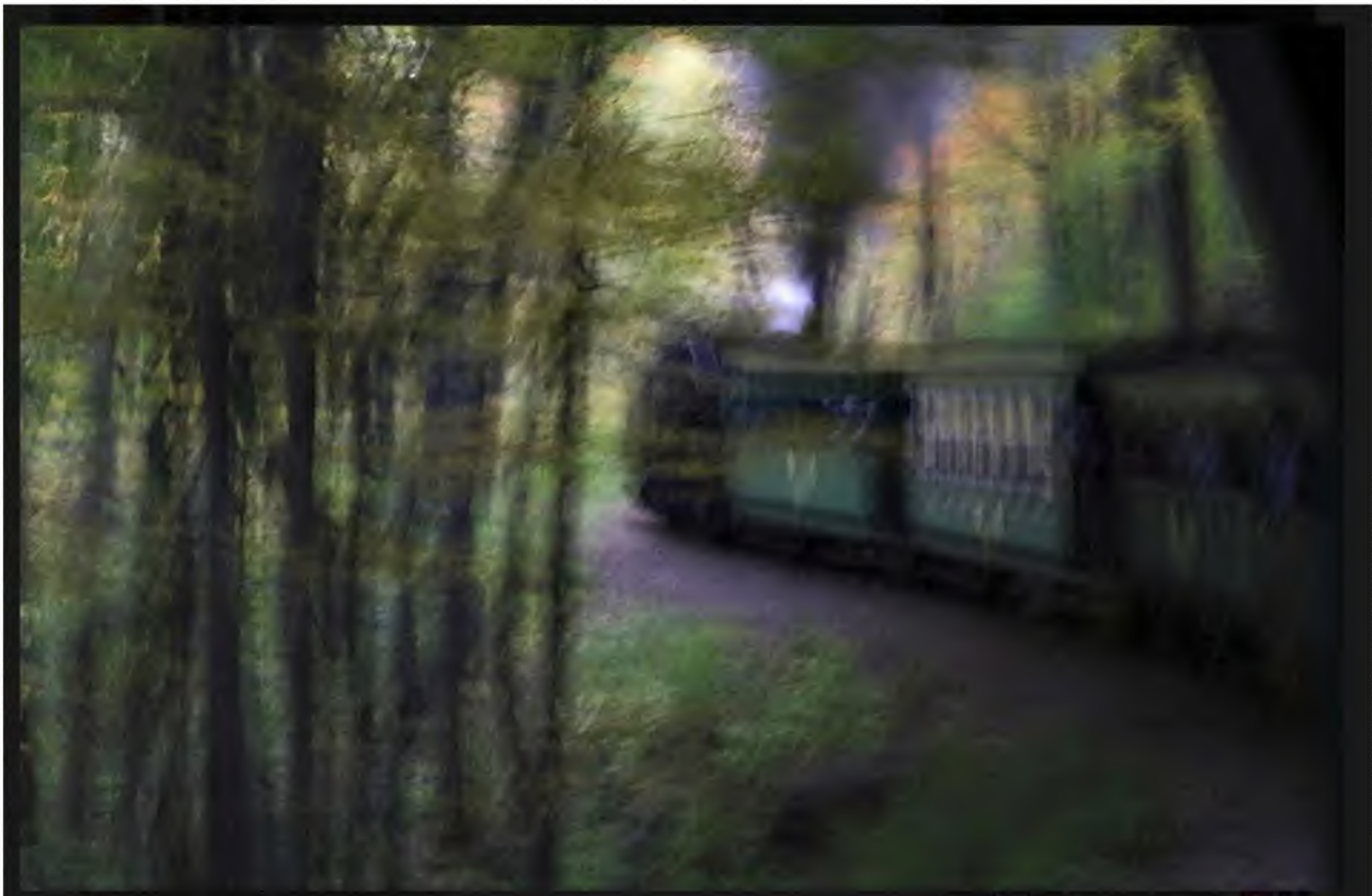
Ascension



Two Green Doors, One Chair



The Stranger



Forest Train



Lost Cottage

Artist Interview - Gregg Morgan



It is helpful to think of autism spectrum disorder as a talent for extraordinary focus. Talk more about your process, how you make these amazing images.

It all starts with a few double espressos to help me get moving, a few beers to calm the jitters for smoother camera operation, and a smoke as a little visual cortex enhancer. I cue up some Ambient Techno or some Long-Haired music and I'm off. With camera in hand my eyes are scanning everything, the music helps slow me down and scrutinize more effectively. Then something catches my eye and time becomes protracted. I don't hear the music, I don't feel the weight of the camera, the environment melts away, the weather doesn't touch me – all that exists is the scene. My mind is going through ISO, shutter speed, aperture, distractions external and internal, evaluating light's qualities, filter use, post edit effects. What will the light be like later, what elements can I try to introduce; what do I have to remove? That takes about 1.5 seconds.

At moments like these I feel rooted to the ground, becoming part of the image, I am the image, and the image is me. The rules for shooting my with a camera are ironically the same as a rifle - Breathe, Relax, Aim, Squeeze. It is here that I discover whether I was able to create what my mind saw. A feeling of absolution washes over me, fills me, a sense of contentment confirms that this is my calling and that my life, replete with all its iniquities and transgressions, unerringly has led me to that place, at that point in time, to share that vision with others.

Artist Interview - Gregg Morgan

Your work is jewel-like color and delicate transparency. What hardware, software, post techniques make that happen?

As for post-editing, all of my images are created in the camera. I learned early that carrying a ton of gear makes me want to shorten my day, my freedom of motion is limited, and, if I ground my gear, I spend more time keeping an eye on that than my purpose for being there. Traveling light and moving fast is the key. Accordingly, I carry one weapon: the new Canon 6D Mark II (considered a medium format digital camera) equipped with my primary lens, an 85-300mm zoom. The key to the zoom lens for me is the versatility. It provides for the opportunity to step back and bring the scene to me or full zoom to isolate a specific aspect of that scene (in a macro kind of way). Most shorter lenses tend to distort an image on the periphery, an aberration that bends light, creating angles and curvatures and lens flares that don't exist in my mind's eye. Telephoto lenses also offer the added advantage of creating shallower depths-of-field. At full zoom, I can deliver a photo of one bird in a flock or one petal of a rose. I have much more control of my images than I have with other types of lenses.

My local contemporaries tell me all this is almost inconsequential. I simply respond... "Almost."



Artist Interview - Gregg Morgan

Your work is deeply emotionally affecting. Yet, these are not shocking images. Whether rich in detail or highly minimal, they somehow get into memory, and we keep going back to "be there" again.

Many have told me that I have a 'Good-Eye.' Ironically the eye is but a lens, it is the mind that sees and interprets. There are times that I experience episodes of synesthesia; at times I can hear light, specifically sunlight. The quality of the light at times fills my head with horns and strings and sometimes voices, rising and swelling and ebbing away, as my sight is robbed of light. Night brings on a new symphony, that always feels like Jazz Fusion.

I love having my images printed on 20"x30" metal sheets and mounted flush to the wall. For me they provide an anchor; I find a center and a sense of balance. They take me back... I wish I could provide the soundtracks and maybe scratch-n-sniff cards. What I do offer my viewers is a pause, a moment to maybe inhale and actually take the time to feel the air they breathe. I invite you to become as lost as I was when the image was captured.

What's next? Upcoming projects, shows?

In the short-term I am loading my life into my Honda Element and driving the 6,000 miles from Norfolk to Seattle. Hoping to get there by way of Burning Man. I say hoping because I am at heart a realist and don't wish to jinx myself... this journey to find my America and the "John Doe Clubs." So join me on this adventure into the "Land with Heart" ... or is it the "Wild-Breadbasket?" Facebook - Mil1lion.



Images throughout: © Gregg Morgan

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

May, 2018

Featured Artist
Soumyendra Saha
"Shot Stories"

Cover Image: © Soumyendra Saha



Artist Interview - Soumyendra Saha

Welcome to Dek Unu, Soumyendra! You came to photography via a roundabout route.

Yes, I am 45 years old and I was a software engineer and developer who decided to quit his cubicle job. Like any number of people, I had a DSLR and I had time on my hands, so I decided to shoot the streets one day... and that was it - I was hooked.

Photography, more so, street photography, is akin to a sort of Zen meditation, where I go into a zone, a higher level of consciousness and focus, where I begin to see many things which I would otherwise miss. A moment may be a simple arrangement of people and things and a particular quality of light, but the end result that it evokes, whether it is a thought or feeling, is much much greater than the sum of parts. Therein lies the sense of success, the thrill of street photography, and the source my of never-ending passion.

After your university training in data systems, your training in photography is quite non-traditional.

I prowled photography sites online, bought many photobooks of the masters, listened to a lot of Hindustani classical music, and watched movies at the local cine club. Visually hungry, I bought books instead of gear. Then, I went looking in the streets of Kolkata, my newly-adopted city, for unposed moments of surprise and emotion like those found in Cartier-Bresson, Diane Arbus, Richard Kalvar, Josef Koudelka's "Exiles," and Raghubir Singh's "India," I went looking for cinematic drama... only more real and on the streets.

In Kolkata, liberal arts is a way of life for a big percentage of people. Being a river city, the moist, fertile plains of Bengal provide a cocoon for the artistic - be it in painting, poetry, movies, literature. I moved to Kolkata three years ago and it fills me with the desire to see more, shoot more.

Street photography is not just pictures taken in the street. How do you define successful street photography?

I think street photography is just candid photography. You take your camera and go out on the streets and photograph whatever you find interesting. You try to tell stories using different elements and people - a summing of the parts. Good street images have an element of magic, a wow-factor. They often lift the too-simple or mundane to extra-ordinary using thought and feeling. There are many different approaches one might take to make good street images like minimalism, noir, layering, proximity, geometry, humor, surprise, intrigue but eventually it is, like a painting, a form of self-expression. The photographer is always visible in the photograph.





No Business



Shadow Man



Pots



Soul



Forever Together



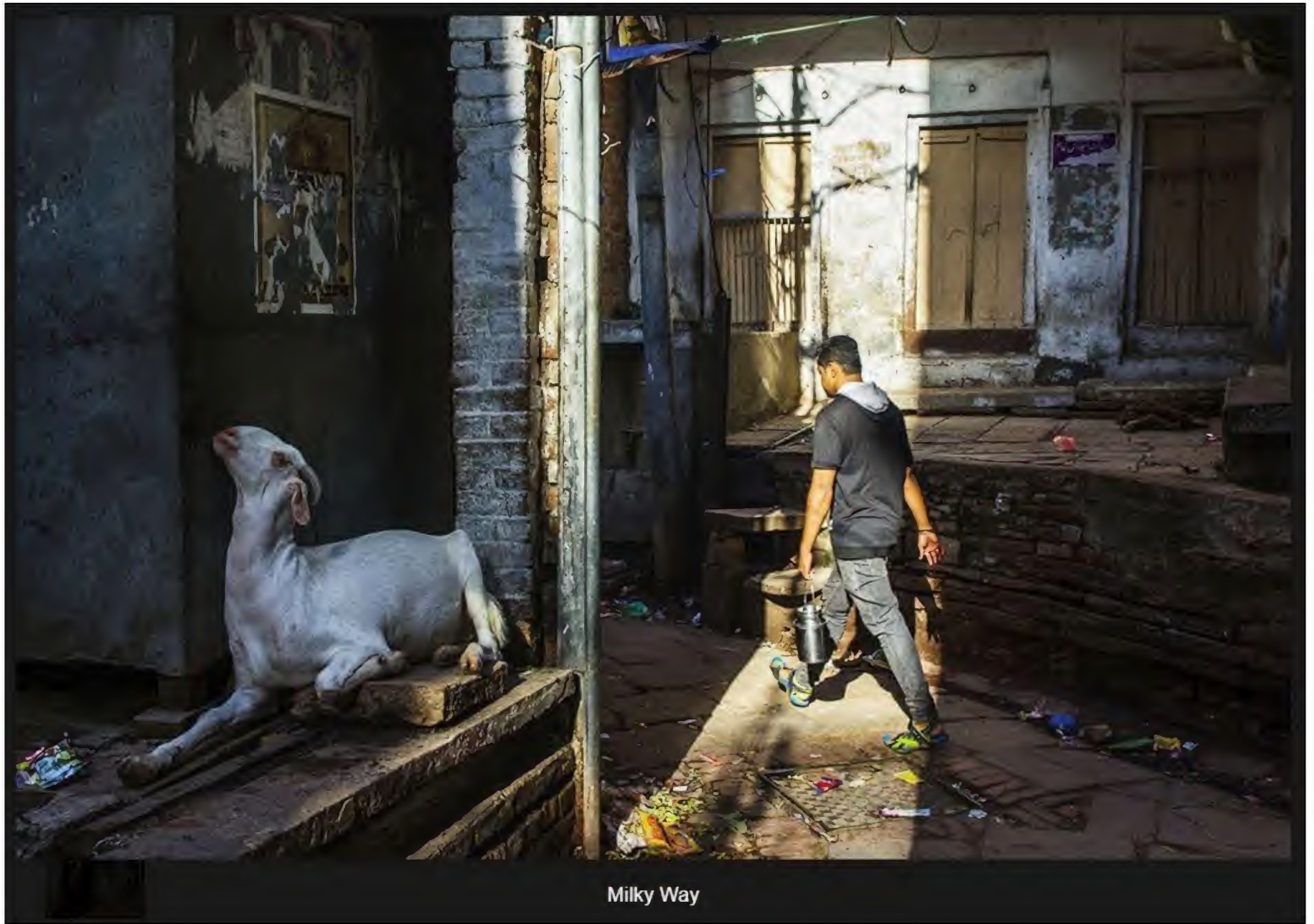
Multi-Tasking



Made In India



No Parking



Milky Way



After Life



Jump

Artist Interview - Soumyendra Saha

There is an on-going discussion in the US and elsewhere about whether a photographer should ask permission to photograph people in the street.

I think it is more of an issue in the West as the personal bubble is a bit larger there. In India, most people don't mind being photographed. If you respect your subjects, they will know. If you are noticed, just a smile after you take the photo usually works. Some people might ask, just to clarify the purpose of the photo. I briefly explain what I am doing and the "artist" keyword is often a trump-card. I never ask permission. I don't speak and I avoid eye-contact before the photograph. If people get suspicious afterwards, I approach them and explain a bit. I do not ask for model releases, I think that is taking things a bit too far. It kills the spirit of the art and genre. I mean, is it even practical to go around shooting with a bunch of forms in your hand? Mutual trust is a better option. You go out on the street to gently lift frozen pieces of everyday life to enjoy later. What is the harm there? If there is an objection, you gently explain and if someone is not happy with that, you offer to delete the photo.

What about your method? Do you make a lot of exposures and select a winner at home? Or do you know immediately that you have caught a good one?

I would say I have moved from making more exposures to fewer as I have developed as a photographer. Nowadays, I notice that I wait to take my camera out. I walk, sometimes many miles a day, and take a photo only when something really interests me. I do not go firing 20 or 30 shots at once. I will shoot 3 or 4 to refine or re-compose to make things perfect if I have the time and the subject is static. I can tell from the moment the viewfinder blinks for the shutter that I have nailed it.

Whenever I go out to shoot I keep two things in mind. One is to keep a cultural context, which will remind me of the time and place the shot was taken. A lingering smell of the place and the smile of the people. The other thing I try to keep a constant focus on is geometry. For me geometry is the source of a lot of reality, the



reality that we see day-in and day-out consists of a lot of geometrical structures and the underlying mathematics plays a role in our subconscious to shape the reality that we construct.

Your most complex scenes are still carefully composed.

When I started going out on the streets, I noticed that when I looked at thumbnails from a day's shoot of 200 images on Windows Explorer, those that caught my eye all that had strong lines and

Artist Interview - Soumyendra Saha

curves and were minimally composed. Those were the clean simple images. So I got into the habit of shooting frames that were like those and also I began automatically to frame an interesting subject with those ideas in mind. But I still shoot junky photos where the content sways me to such an extent that I forget the composition and mess it all up!

Talk about your "kit." Are you exclusively a digital photographer? What camera, lenses, gizmos, etc.? What computer, software, filters and fun things?

I shoot digital exclusively. I have used an entry-level Canon DSLR and a standard zoom lens for a long time. Lightweight was one of the deciding factors as to which camera I chose to use originally. But now, even though I have a lighter mirror-less camera, a Fujifilm XT_10, I don't quite like the EVF. It is too contrasty and laggy for me. Natural light hitting the eye is best. No filters except the UV or lens protector ones and no flashes. Though I have a 23mm f/2 lens for the Fuji, I might soon fall back on a DSLR yet again.

I recently got a used old point-and-shoot, a Sony DSC-W100 which I keep in my pocket always to grab that sudden image, mostly for B/W and fun.

That is about it as far as camera gear goes. I have a locally-assembled desktop at home and the standard Lightroom and Photoshop. I use a Benq Eye-Care monitor which is very good for reducing eye-strain from long hours of editing.

What's in the future? Plans for a project? Exhibition? Trip? Book?

I am working on an ongoing cancer project at a nearby hospital. It is a paid project and my first foray into documentary photography. Underway now, it will end soon.

Later on, I plan to do more documentary work, but no concrete plans for now as to what. Transgenders and dhakis and the drum-beaters who migrate in hundreds to the city during festival season are two documentary ideas I have kept in the planning stage for quite some time.



For now, maybe, I'm too happy with street! I do wish to travel to some cities like Mumbai, Delhi and probably Paris, sometime, but those are like daydreams. I think about it and then realize there is so much more to cover back home in the lanes of Kolkata. I am never tired or bored on the streets of Kolkata.

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

June, 2018

Featured Artist
Ian Sanderson
"Hand Made"

Cover Image: Vienna
© Ian Sanderson



Artist Interview - Ian Sanderson

Welcome, Ian. Yours has been a long and winding road.

I left Glasgow at 18, in 1969, to study Fine Art at Sunderland University. After graduation, I spent a couple of years at manual labor before 1975, when I found work in a silkscreen shop, specialising in printing onto glass. From 1978 to 1980, I worked as a photographer in the conservation department for the Newcastle-upon-Tyne group of museums...disciplined work, developing real technical skills.

After a move to Brighton and a one-year post-grad in Art Education, I taught Visual Art in a closed unit for young criminals. I was also given a full-time position as a lecturer at Northbrook College, teaching drawing and photography. I stayed in England and at Northbrook through 1990. While teaching, I began to pick up work from publishers and magazines and decided to leave my college position and to work freelance. At just the same time, the UK economy went into recession and, in the serious financial crash, I lost most of my clients and my apartment! I took a chance, moved to rural France, where accommodation was very cheap, and tried to rebuild my career.

In 1993, a well-paid catalogue job allowed me to buy a computer and a copy of *Photoshop* which looked to be the future of commercial photography. It took a while, but working with the *Photoshop* manual, I became very proficient and, by 1995, I was finding commercial work using the new technology. Since then, my list of commercial clients has included General Motors, Subaru, Alfa Romeo, Coca Cola, and an assortment of corporate and financial organisations.

In 2009, an assignment from the *Financial Times* in London to photograph the jewelry designer and philanthropist, Elsa Peretti, resulted in a collaboration with her which continues to the present day.

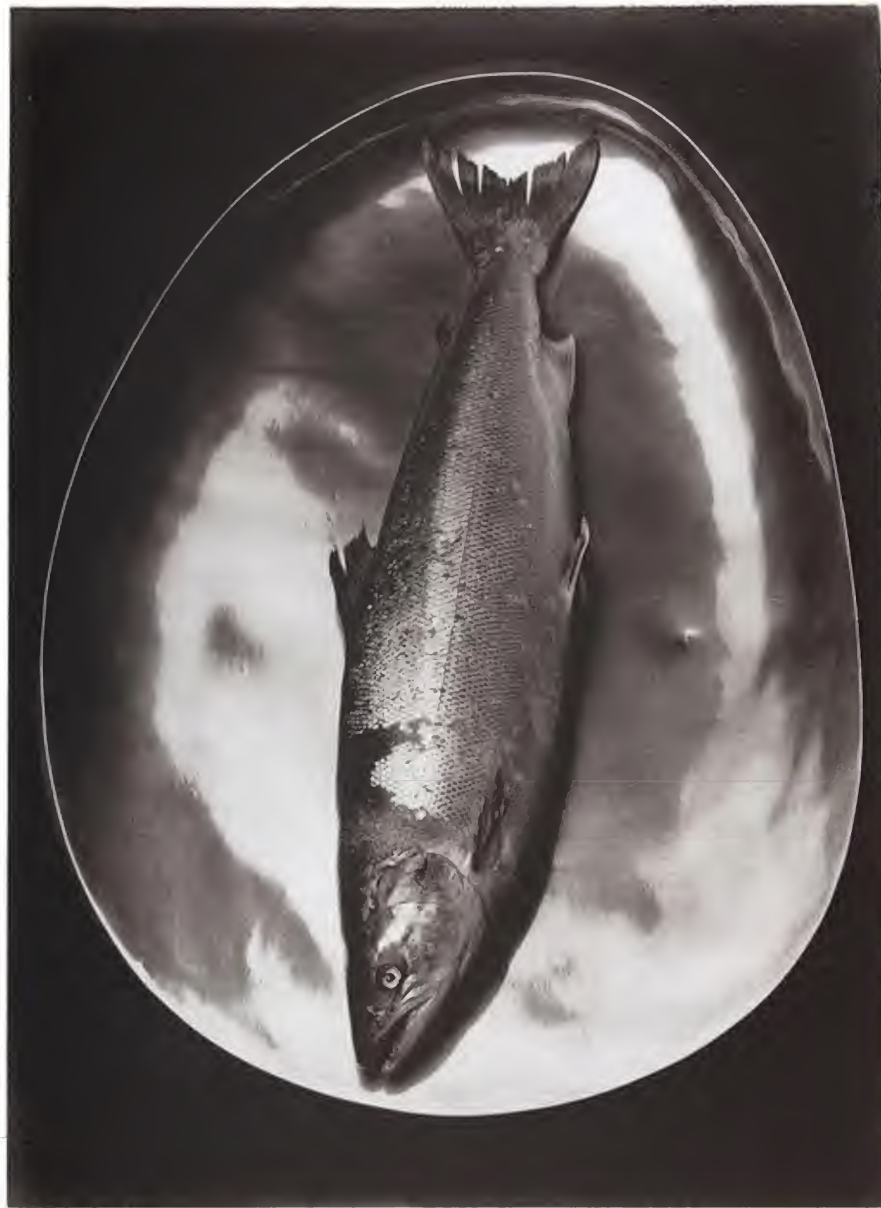
You are one among very few who work on vellum backed with gold or silver foil. The effect is mesmerizing. How do you do it?

The process is quite simple; the vellum is coated with platinum, palladium, and ferric oxalate solution. I use a glass topped dry-mounting press to expose the paper in contact with a large, digitally-created internegative. Vellum is tricky when it is wet so the process is very artisanal - lots of trial and error. The metal backing shows through the vellum giving the print a unique color and luminosity.

I use digital negatives and large format negs from 10 x 8, 5 x 7, and 5 x 4 cameras. Back in the dark ages, I used Lith Film for my internegs, but now I print them using a large inkjet printer, a gift from Epson France in return for a print that they display in their Paris office. The chemicals for platinum/palladium printing are very expensive; less than half an eyedropper bottle costs around \$300. It can get depressing when the print ends up in the trash after hours of work.

There is a lot of interest in film and alt-process photography these days. What led you back to "long form" photoart?

Up until 2002, I was still shooting film so the transition was gradual. Film is horrible stuff in every way; I have never understood why people get romantic about it, so when I realised I could free myself from it by using digital capture, it was a joy. The result was that my archive of tens of thousands of negatives and transparencies was filed away in metal cabinets which I lugged around whenever I moved. But, I don't see that I moved "back" to the "long form" as you put it, rather, I think I moved forward to another way of producing my art. Photography has always followed technology; there is no such thing as "traditional" photography, and what I am doing now is moving forward. I have a background in printmaking and have always liked to produce prints. I like the idea that an image can also be an object, and my artwork is best seen in person, in physical space.



Salmon



Sophie



Dragonfly



Barcelona



Carrousel



Nikita



Nathalie



Diver



Swimmer



Caroline

Artist Interview - Ian Sanderson

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Some photographers work from a pre-visualized plan, others may be quite random, relying on happy accident. Talk about your method, the evolution of a piece.

I don't have any kind of preset. I capture images and don't look at them for months. I like to work with a camera, but I don't enjoy the rest very much. If it wasn't for Nathalie, my partner and subject of one of the images in this portfolio, and her organising and assisting me, I would have produced much less work over the last fifteen years. Images evolve over time; it's a relatively big decision to make a print, especially a gum print as they can take days to produce. I don't like repetition so I try not to make "another of the same but different." Some would call that a style, but I think it was Picasso who said, "It's just like making cakes." Once, an editor in Paris told me I had no direction. She liked an image of a carousel I showed her. I asked her if I would be a better photographer if I went round Paris photographing more carousels.

She said, "Yes."

I left.

Your nudes are extraordinary, intimate, sensual, and creative. Do you have advice for others regarding working with a model?

Fall in love for the day. Look without a camera in your hand. Take your time. Talk to your model like you would to a close friend. Try not to be nervous. Make them laugh if you can. Above all don't be precious about your pictures; nobody dies if you get it wrong. Remember the process is more important than the product. Show your work and accept criticism.

A photography teacher imparts technique but also educates students' "critical eye." How do you teach? Is there an overarching message (or messages) you stress?

I used to make my photo students take drawing classes. Drawing is the basis of all the visual arts, in my opinion. When you draw, you are obliged to look at your subject for a very long time. My main

message is that a photograph is an object that you make, you don't "take it." If you agree that you "make it", then you are responsible for every aspect of it. Most of photography these days is activity based, which is fine and fun, but if you are asked to go into a studio and photograph a car or are asked by a magazine to photograph a person or a product, then you have to have a much more disciplined approach.

Idols, mentors, or other influences? Positive or negative?

I think you can always learn something by talking to other image makers. I think every artist or designer I have met has taught me something. The references in Art are huge, not to mention the vast resource that exists in advertising, film, illustration, etc. Photography relies on so many other disciplines: Architecture, Fashion, Dance, Sport, the list goes on. Even so called "abstract" photographers have to photograph something. I have huge admiration for the pioneers of photography; it was so hard for them. It makes me smile when I see the pictures of people standing next to their large format cameras as if there is any comparison. I am pretty sure if Ansel Adams had got his hands on a 100 megapixel Hasselblad, things might have been different.

What's next? Are there plans for an exhibit, book, or project on the horizon?

At the beginning of last year, I had a solo show in Barcelona, 75 artworks. I have been working on a book project and a catalogue for a major jewellery company. I am now going back into my archive, both digital and analogue, to try and organize it, no fun. My project now is try and commercialise my work. I am in the wrong part of the world to sell photography, in a 13th-century village in Catalonia, Spain, isolated, out of contact with any university or arts-interest community. But, I am not too concerned at the moment. I hope to do more gum and lith printing and produce some bigger platinum/palladium on vellum and, above all, make some new images.

Where can we see more of your work?

See my website at www.iansanderson.com for portfolios in platinum/palladium, gum bichromate, lith, and silver gelatin. Also, click the images below to hit video links: "Picture of Karina," which shows step-by-step how I make a gum bichromate print (over two days), and "Hand Made Prints," which documents a gallery show of my work in Barcelona.



(Click image to play video)



(Click image to play video)

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

July, 2018

Featured Artist

Tara Ott

"Individualized
Personality Series"

Cover Image: Individualized
Personality Series #6
© Tara Ott



Artist Interview - Tara Ott

Hi, Tara, This is a stunning portfolio...What a creative idea!

I invited women of all ages and races to be a part of the project on a voluntary basis. The volunteer, whom I had not previously met, and I met for coffee so I could conduct an informal interview to understand who they were as an individual. I would read their body language and listen to what they were saying in order to gauge who I perceived them to be, based solely on this informal interview. From there, I would go to my studio and enter a large diorama I built out of plywood, two by fours, and drywall. The structure was eight feet long and six feet tall and consisted of three walls, a floor, and a roof. Through an abstract translation of each person's personality, I covered the entire interior with paint. Afterwards, I would invite the model back and paint the front of her body from head to toe with acrylic paint that matched painted space. The final stage was to photograph her painted form in the painted structure. The final pose, which became a visual illustration of the entire process, was also based on the interview.

The idea behind this project was to create unique identities for each of the women past the initial look or the sexualization of their nudity. Instead, I focused on them as empowered people and how they presented themselves rather than simply what they looked like. I found that the paint and textures frequently took away details like their race and age while highlighting their individual personality traits.

A project this complex must have required lots of planning.

I consider myself an accidental artist; projects sort of just happen. I have never been one to get an idea, execute it perfectly, and then be able to talk about it effectively. My process is very piecemeal. With this particular series, I started having dreams about this giant room/diorama. I dreamed about it every night. When I decided that these dreams were not going to stop, I decided to build it. After I built the room, I sat with it in my studio for days (maybe weeks?) until I started getting the feeling I had to order paint.

When the paint arrived, I decided to just go ahead and paint my giant diorama white. (You see where this is going?) The next push I felt was to ask someone to come in to be painted; but first I sat down to have coffee and talk about what I was thinking. (I honestly did not quite know what I was thinking). The coffee became a casual conversation where I let the subject talk about herself. This sparked the entire project.

I did not know for a long time, maybe not even until this project came to pass, that I could read people's auras. I just knew after talking to this woman that a certain color and pattern popped in my head that I needed to translate in my room. Ultimately, the model ended up a part of it as well after I painted the room.

This attracted a spiral of volunteers. Once I had one done, the model would share with their friends and the friends (whom I never met) would call me to ask if they could model. I, of course, said yes and started the entire process again. Coffee, paint, body paint, photo, and goodbye.

Some of the people that volunteered were my friends or colleagues, but mostly it was strangers that heard about me from word of mouth. I had no guidelines about the volunteers except that they had to be women. I do a lot of female/feminist art and felt it was important to do portraits of strong women, how I depict them, and how they depict themselves.





Individualized Personality Series 1



Individualized Personality Series 2



Individualized Personality Series 3



Individualized Personality Series 4



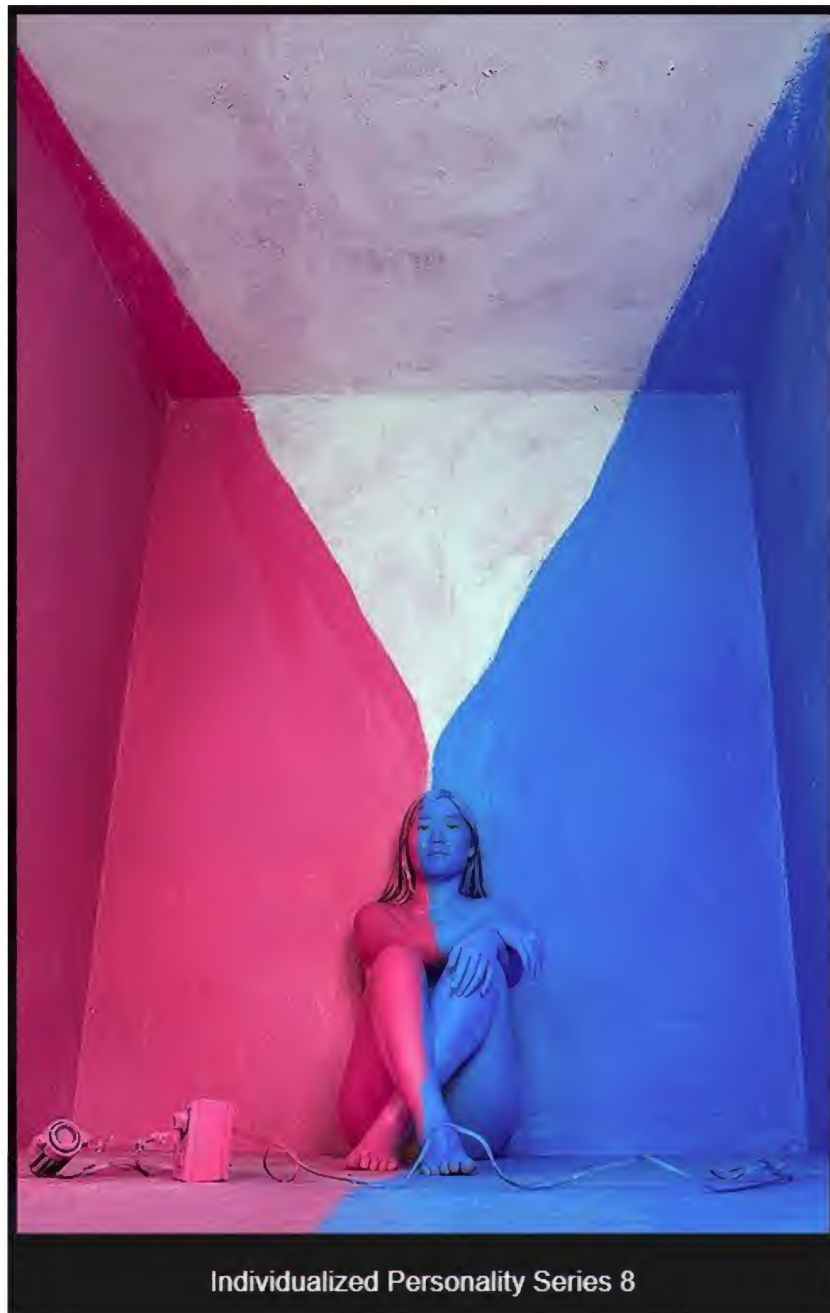
Individualized Personality Series 5



Individualized Personality Series 6



Individualized Personality Series 7



Individualized Personality Series 8



Individualized Personality Series 9



Individualized Personality Series 10



Individualized Personality Series 11

These images seem deeply personal. What kinds of questions did you ask?

I love this question. This is what I'll say about it - I have never shared what I asked them nor what the subject said. I wanted that performance aspect of the piece to be personal. I would like the images to speak for themselves instead of needing to share what was spoken about. I will say it was a very informal interview. I let them steer the conversation but might direct if I felt they needed a little prompting.

How did your models react to the finished product?

Overwhelmingly so, the models were all happy with their painting and final photograph. I had some who were shocked that I depicted them so accurately while others just talked about how they enjoyed their image and thought their own picture was the best.

Talk about your feminism and its connection to your work.

Oh, I am most definitely a feminist artist. I really love to explore the female interpretation and how it is construed by the viewer. I don't believe that only women can be feminist; my husband is one too. I am part of the fourth wave feminism movement where I want to see all people in all acts of life to be seen as equal. I have found, through my studies and artistic career, that I have the most powerful message if I deliver my personal experience instead of trying to talk about issues as a whole. In that way, I relate to feminism and the voice of one of the many minorities.



You have BFA and MFA degrees, earned with honors. Any words for someone taking an academic path in the arts?

I'd say do your research. For grad school, if you want to study art, figure out what school best compliments your art style. I wanted to be sure to work in whatever media I wanted at any given time, so I looked for schools that were interdisciplinary. If you want to teach, make sure you find a school that has the option to let its grads become TAs. Most undergrad art schools require you to take studio classes in multiple media. Really utilize that to see what other formats you can express yourself in. This is the time to be messy and make bad work that leads to better work. Lastly, if you want to pursue the arts - do it. Don't let anyone tell you it's a pointless degree. If it makes you happy then just follow your gut.

Influences? Mentor(s)? Or, maybe, someone from your past who deserves an "I told you so?"

I have been studying and looking at tableau photography for as long as I can remember. Gregory Crewdson, Cindy Sherman, Sandy Skoglund, and Catherine Opie are some of my favorite artists. I find myself looking at their work often.

One of the best mentors I have ever had was my graduate advisor- Corinne Diop. She is a fantastic artist that has such a zest for life. Something about our art styles just clicked. I remember one summer hanging out with her in the digital photography lab and just scanning body parts on the flat bed scanner and not really knowing why. I found our art styles are very similar in that we act first and figure out why later. She was someone I could walk into her office and tell her "I have no idea what I'm doing or what art I'm going to make." She would just reply "Don't worry. It'll come to you, just keep on going and don't stress in the meantime." Ultimately, I'd just talk to her about life in her office or in my studio. Obviously, I'd find inspiration later on. She was always right. It was never going to be the last idea I ever had. I just had to let it come naturally. Anyway, phenomenal teacher and friend.

Do you teach? Is there a message for them embedded in your work with students?

I'm not currently teaching but, over the years, I have worked as a gallerist, studio assistant, critic, and graduate advisor. I also taught drawing, darkroom photography, digital photography, and visual technology.

When I teach, I push my students to find a concept that really speaks to them and to develop their own style. I had professors in undergrad that really wanted me to make art like they envisioned. I found this to be really harmful as a student and, more importantly, as a developing artist. I wanted the "A" so I changed my style instead of developing what was true to me. As a professor, I try really hard to let the students take their own path. My job is to give them a loose prompt and help them craft wise and to critique how successfully their concept is conveyed. I want to help shape artists... not to make clones of myself.



You have compiled an extensive exhibit and publication history including several recent international shows. How do you prospect for opportunities?

I constantly look up show opportunities on varying art opportunity websites. I tend to look for free shows because, let's face it, it's expensive enough being an artist and shipping work. The best site I have found for listings of international show opportunities outside of the United States, and the original source for my recent shows in Stockholm, Rome, and Frankfurt, Germany, is www.theartguide.com. For opportunities in the United States, I have had good luck with listings at www.zapplication.com and "cafe" or www.callforentry.com.

What's next? A new project? Travel? Show(s)? A book?

I want to continue to build up my show record and hopefully start adding in a lot more solo shows to it.

As far as my art practice goes, I am always working on something new. As I learned when I was in school, I'm letting the work be successful or not and giving myself the grace to let my work guide me. Not all my projects need to be on my website. Haha!

Hopefully, next time we talk, I will have a job at a university and will be making work that will end up in a show or book. For now, I'll keep creating and allow my future to remain open.

Where can we see more of your work?

You can find more of my work on www.TaraOtt.com. Feel free to send me a message there too. I love talking to other artists.





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Support from the SEALS Foundation

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